Bad, Bad Alpha!

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Bad, Bad Alpha!

by Vixiak

Summary

The doors opened, and the Chesapeake Ripper was brought into the arena. However, he didn't look like Will had remembered him. His hair was disheveled and he wasn't clean-shaven like he'd been in the time before his arrest. He, too, was covered solely by a loincloth. Under the spotlights his deliberately oiled muscles gleamed even more like those of roman gladiators. He was bound, a mask over his face and hands chained in front of him – chains that he was being dragged forward by.

Notes

Hi guys!

This is my submission for Omega Will Festival — 2024! It's my first time participating in WGA's event and I am very excited about it! I'd like to thank @indigocarnation and Mods for their amazing job and organization of such a great event.

I started to write this fic months ago. I didn't plan for it to be so long but shit happens. I finished it long time ago in my native language (Polish) and started to translate it, but then a tragic event in my life happened, and I was 'out of service' for a long time. Thanks to help of my amazing beta and constant support I was able to continue working on this fic. The translation is nearly finished and I will post regularly!

Big, big thanks to @Redeye17 for her amazing, hard work with beta, I couldn't post it without her help! ❤️
Thanks to @silvergoldsea, @Space_sinner and @pesky_dust for great suggestions and opinions!

The idea for this fic came to me when I was browsing through amazing fanart of @zillabean picturing feral, collared alpha Hannibal covered in blood. I just wanted to write anything where I could use it for. Thank you for inspiration, Zilla!

This is my first long fic for this fandom, I am stressed and nervous af so all comments and feedback will be greatly appreciated! I have many, many more fics I could translate but I am unsure since my English sucks. I've heard that I have a specific style, I write 'short and to the point' way, rather without flowery descriptions, so it's not everyone's cup of tea but I hope that at least someone will like it. :)

Please, enjoy!

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

Modern times were no longer conducive to being an alpha. For centuries, from ancient times to the twentieth century, right up to the end of the war, alphas ruled the world. The greatest military commanders, political leaders, war heroes, top doctors, inventors, and successful people – throughout the centuries, they were always alphas.
However, when left-wing fractions came to power after the war, everything changed. Alphas were deemed responsible for all the greatest crimes, and the greatest evil in the history of the earth. Caesar was an alpha, Alexander the Great was an alpha, Attila, Mao, Pol Pot, Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler – they were all alphas.
That's why the US, the first country in the world to do so, had changed the law. Now omegas rule the world.

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Will didn't know why he let Beverly talk him into this. Why did he agree? He hated crowds, he hated places where there were a lot of people. After work, he just wanted to hole up at home with his dogs and tinker with engines or go fishing. He didn't need anything more. However, he couldn't refuse when the whole forensic team chipped in for this outing for him, to celebrate his catch of the Chesapeake Ripper. Will had exposed him a long time ago, but the interrogations and trials took a while. The bastard was rich and had good lawyers.
Will himself received huge compensation for catching the most sought-after murderer of the modern era. Actually, he wouldn't have to work at all anymore. And he seriously considered leaving. He didn't think anything bigger was waiting for him at the FBI than the Ripper.

He sighed heavily, sitting in the crowded arena. He had never been interested in alphas. He was on suppressants and scent blockers for years. He didn't like alpha fights and wasn't impressed by such spectacles.

"Cheer up, Will! Most of them are criminals!" shouted an extremely excited Bev sitting next to him, nudging him with her elbow.

"Yeah," Will muttered quietly, grimacing.

"You know you can buy them?" the woman interjected.

"Why would I want to buy any of them?" asked Will skeptically.

"Just sayin'. Losers are cheaper," she replied, shrugging. "They'll all die sooner or later so they're always happy to sell them. More profits. Also, you can make bets for every fight."

Will sighed. He tore his gaze away from his phone and looked at the arena, where two alphas were currently fighting, both only wearing loincloths. One well-built alpha suddenly pinned

the other to the ground, encircling his neck with his arm. He bared sharp teeth and tilted his head back.

Awaiting the verdict.

"The Snake has lost! What should the Arizona Killer do?!" echoed the speakers.

"Kill, kill, kill…!" the crowd shouted. Mostly betas, but it was the omegas who shouted the loudest.

The Arizona Killer smiled, and then, without waiting, snapped the other alpha's neck. The audience was buzzing with excitement. Moments later, guards entered the arena to carry away the body of the loser.

Will rubbed his temples and closed his eyes. He had already had enough.

"The next fight is something everyone has been waiting for! Here is the infamous Chesapeake Ripper himself!" came the sudden echoing voice of the announcer. Will's eyes shot open violently, and he raised his head, intrigued.
Bev smiled contentedly.

"Surprise!" she exclaimed.

The doors opened, and the Chesapeake Ripper was brought into the arena. However, he didn't look like Will had remembered him. His hair was disheveled and he wasn't clean-shaven like he'd been in the time before his arrest. He, too, was covered solely by a loincloth. Under the spotlights his deliberately oiled muscles gleamed even more like those of roman gladiators. He was bound, a mask over his face and hands chained in front of him – chains that he was being dragged forward by. With their guns aimed at him, the guards cautiously started removing the restraints only after they had entered far into the arena.

Hannibal narrowed his eyes, surveying the audience. This farce was humiliating. Degrading. And he knew that was precisely its purpose.
Objectification. The indirect and sometimes direct sale of prisoners to bring in profits. It ended with the police rejoicing when another murderer emerged from the world. They sold best in the arena.

Hannibal was no fan of such spectacles. However, he knew one thing. If they wanted a beast, they would get a beast in its full, brutal glory.

He allowed himself to be unchained and his mask removed, and when he saw his opponent standing on the other side of the ring still dripping with his predecessor's blood, his eyes narrowed to enraged slits. He bared his fangs, too long even for an alpha, when their eyes met. And then the gong sounded and the fight began. Hannibal waited for the second alpha to charge at him; only at the last moment did he quickly dodge, grab him from behind, and throw the man, who rivaled his own size, to the ground.

It took him only three minutes to snap his neck.

The audience erupted.
"That was easy to predict! It’s the Ripper after all!" the commentator shouted.

Will didn’t even realize when he became absorbed by the display. He sat stiff like a pole, straight, tense, and his big eyes were following the alpha. The Ripper. He didn’t pay any attention to his opponent. He didn’t flinch when his neck was snapped. He watched, unaware of the fascination in his own gaze.

"What a fuckin’ beast!" Beverly’s scream tore him from this peculiar trance. He blinked and looked away with difficulty.

"H-he is," he replied quietly.

"I wonder how long he will last. Maybe I will make a bet," she laughed. Will swallowed hard, not responding. Another alpha was brought into the arena. “The Crusher,” the commentator announced. A one-eyed, scarred, bald alpha who dwarfed the Ripper in size. It seemed that Ripper might be in trouble, especially since he had already fought once and the alpha that had entered the ring hadn't even worked up a sweat yet.
Hannibal narrowed his eyes, briefly circling the other alpha. He wasn't in a hurry. He waited for him to rush at him. Only then did he throw himself down onto his legs, using the other alpha's weight against him, knockinghim to the ground with force.
He was momentarily blinded when his opponent kicked him in the jaw. Blood flowed down his mouth. When he sobered up, he growled and bared his fangs. He wiped the blood from his jaw, smearing it slightly.
And then he precisely punched his opponent in the stomach. He took advantage of the moment when the alpha doubled over, and with great force, slammed the other alpha's body against the stone wall in front of him, smashing his face on it.
Soon the other alpha was dead. The audience went wild. They started chanting. "Ripper, Ripper!"
Will just sat there, as if enchanted, watching. His large eyes were shining. He absorbed with his whole body and mind what was happening on the sands of the arena. The savage, primitive brutality, the fight for survival, the will to survive. But also the pride, the contempt, the superiority.

"Woah. That was good," Bev gasped. "I'm going to buy some popcorn. Do you want some?" she asked. They had a few minutes break before the next fight. Hannibal was grounded and held at gunpoint while the arena was cleaned.

Will just shook his head and licked his lips, never taking his eyes off the alpha in the arena. The Ripper was coldly staring at the audience as if they were vermin. Even though he was out of breath, glistening with sweat, his body stained with blood here and there, dirty from the sands of the arena, his gaze seemed cold, composed, as if he was in control of everything.

He is a true thoroughbred, strong alpha.
A thought appeared in his head without his participation, omega instincts speakingup. He was unaware that his cheeks were red. And it was still not over.

The next opponent was introduced. And immediately after him another. The Chesapeake Ripper killed one alpha after another. He was getting weaker, wounded more and more often,

but he kept fighting and winning victory after victory. The audience’s screams intensified, especially when the commentator's voice rang out - the Chesapeake Ripper had won more victories and broken the arena record, defeating his thirtieth opponent in a row.

It was already the middle of the night. It was the longest series of fights in the history of the arena., no one left the audience, everyone watched each fight with mountingtension. Crazy bets were being made, everyone was betting only on the Ripper.

Will was glad that the arena was filled with the mixed scent of many omegas, their emotions, and blood. No one paid attention to the smell of slick, which to his shock appeared between his thighs. He squeezed them nervously. He felt so damn hot.

He licked his lips when the Ripper won another victory. However, a trained eye could see that he was extremely exhausted. Blood was flowing down his body, sand was sticking to it. More and more of it came from his own wounds.

Will frowned. His empathy and developed sense of observation told him that the Ripper was approaching the end. He had been winning the last few fights mainly thanks to luck or cunning. To his surprise, the omega felt… nervous.

I… I don’t want him dead.
The Ripper defeated two more alphas before his reflexes slowed enough that he could no longer avoid his opponent's grasp. The large, dark-skinned alpha, at full strength, literally threw him like a sack of potatoes. Blood gushed as he slammed into the arena wall with force. The impact was so strong that it knocked him out, momentarily taking his consciousness away.

Will gasped and jumped to his feet, but no one paid any attention. Most of the audience did so out of emotion, excitement, or wanting to see better.

The omega watched as the other alpha lifted the Ripper by his hair. Then he violently began to push his way to the exit.

"Will?" Bev called after him, but he ignored her. He burst out of the stands and ran down the corridor toward the trading part of the arena.

"Kill, kill, kill," he heard a chant coming from the arena and his heart beat faster. "I will buy him!" he shouted from the threshold, rushing into the transaction office.

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When Hannibal woke up, he was lying on the sand of the arena. Half-conscious, and weak, with his opponent's strong arm around his head. He could hear the audience chanting loudly "kill, kill, kill" as iffrom behind a thick wall. And that was all of the adoration they had for him over the past few hours. Losing was enough to make him an unnecessary bag of meat.

He narrowed his eyes, feeling contempt for all these people.
He was too weak. He had lost too much blood, not even having a few minutes to recuperate during all this time. He knew that this was the end for him.
He only thought sarcastically that hopefully they liked his last performance. His Last piece of craft. Brutal and stripped of art.
The alpha above him growled and tightened his grip, choking him. His vision went dark, his breath was cut. He bared his fangs with a growl, instinctively, too weak to launch a counterattack, to defend himself.
And suddenly everything stopped.

"Ladies and Gentlemen! Breaking news! The Chesapeake Ripper has been saved and purchased by an anonymous buyer!" resounded from the speakers. Hannibal's heart pounded in shock, and he froze, opening his eyes, dimmed by pain and fatigue, wider.

The blood roared in his ears. At the same time, he felt a growing sense of horror, For he was aware of what this meant.

Stripped of any dignity. A fate even worse than death.

The audience howled, partly with excitement, partly with indignation. His opponent was forcibly pulled away from him, and he was lifted from the sand. And then darkness surrounded him.

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The first thing Hannibal felt was a huge, piercing, throbbing headache. It seemed to spread and resonate throughout his entire body. What had just happened? The first thought reminded him that he should have died. But why was he still alive?
He wrinkled his nose slightly and moved, wanting to get up, feeling the pressure in his bladder. He froze then, feeling something he should have expected.
The chains jingled loudly. Hannibal growled, instinctively baring his fangs at the sight, and yanked on the chains to see if he could break them. He was weak and injured, so the bed frame only creaked.
When he lifted his hand, however, he saw that it was bandaged. Somehow all his wounds were taken care of. He was also washed; there was no more oil, sweat, dirt, or blood on his body. He narrowed his eyes, ceasing to fight the chain in vain, and his mind occupied itself with assessing the situation.
He was lying in a rather narrow bed. His legs were also chained by the ankles to the legs of the cot. The room was small, furnished only with a large wardrobe.
He did not have much time for contemplation before the door to the room opened. A brown-haired, blue-eyed man in corduroys and a plaid shirt entered the room. Omega, Hannibal sensed it instinctively, but he didn’t have to scent him to know that. He recognized him immediately and he knew perfectly well who he was. He knew him from court. He narrowed his eyes and focused on him, his gaze burning with a newfound intensity.

The famous FBI profiler Will Graham stood before him, in the flesh. The same one who had led to the capture of the terrifying Chesapeake Ripper.

The reason he was currently in this situation. Literally and figuratively.

"I see you are awake," the omega said, approaching the bed. He was holding a chipped mug with a dog's face in his hand. "Thirsty?"
Hannibal swept him with his gaze, assessing the situation in a quick analysis of what to expect. However, he knew how this place worked. He was aware that he had been bought to be a slave; for whatever reason, this omega considered it amusing. He considered his bandaged wounds and guessed that he didn't want him dead. He saw his rather worn-out, discount clothes and smelled his cheap, nose-biting aftershave. He didn't look like the kind of person who would spend thousands of dollars lightly just to squash a fly himself, rather than watch it die under someone else's boot. He tilted his head slightly.

If he wanted to torture him, which was a common goal of omegas who bought out criminals for their own amusement and satisfaction, he would probably first bring him a sense of relative peace.

His entire analysis took maybe two seconds. Enough for him to still be able to respond naturally enough, immediately putting on a mask.

"I certainly shall be grateful for the glass of water," he said. His voice was hoarse. Some sand from the arena still lingered in his throat. "Will Graham, I presume. Please forgive my lack of proper greeting, as I do not know the time of day to use it," he added politely. The windows were tightly covered, perhaps secured with something so that the alpha wouldn't have a way to escape through them.

Will cocked one eyebrow and tilted his head, seeing this behavior. How much effort Hannibal put into his persona, even though Will could see through him better than anyone. He also felt omegan satisfaction that he had been recognized, pleased that he didn't have to introduce himself.

"You don't have to act. I know it’s exhausting," he replied. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, as if in polite amusement, disbelieving that the omega wanted him not to put on an act. He measured him with an intense gaze, forced to admit that he was exceptionally charming, something He had noticed this during the trial.

Will looked toward the window.

"It's Friday evening. I pulled down the curtains for the night already. You were unconscious for two days," he informed. He looked at the cup in his hands. "It's an herbal tea. Should help you feel better. I’ll help you drink now. Are you gonna try to bite me?" Hannibal’s mouth ticked up in a slight smirk. He felt amusement at the question.

"I believe that would be rude, considering that I am your guest. At least if this is not the reason you've invited me in," he noted. Omegas had various fetishes for which they bought criminals. There were even some whose greatest fantasy was death by being eaten alive by a handsome alpha.

Will raised his eyebrows at that. Guest? Invited me? Funny choice of words for a literal slave.

"Rude... " Will repeated and narrowed his eyes. He gasped after a moment, eyes widening as realization flooded him. "That's why you've been killing. Because they were 'rude'? That's why we struggled to find a pattern."

Hannibal's countenance remained unchanged, eloquent, not confirming but not denying either. His gaze said it all.

"A culture of politeness is unfortunately not widely enough spread in our times," he added after a moment. Will narrowed his eyes at him, simply looking at him. He didn't comment. But it was undoubtedly amazing how well this omega's brain worked. His mind had picked up a random word in conversation and combined it with the circumstances to come to the correct conclusion. He must have thought about it a lot.

Hannibal glanced meaningfully at the cup.

"I am certain I would be able to drink by myself without being chained up to the bed."

Will smiled mirthlessly. "For sure. And you would be able to kill me too,".
Hannibal tilted his head slightly, looking like the embodiment of innocence."And why would I do that, Will?"
Will wanted to burst out laughing at that question."Because you like killing and you have your reasons to kill me," he replied. "And I pretty much don't want to die. So forgive me for these security measures."

He cautiously reached his hand out to slide it beneath the alpha's head and lift it. He watched him carefully, like a ticking bomb, ready to remove his hand at any moment. Hannibal, however, allowed it to happen calmly. He only narrowed his eyes slightly. Will brought the cup to his lips, and the alpha drank slowly. He did not take his eyes off the omega, watching his reactions. Hannibal's gaze seemed to penetrate through and through. Will didn't meet his eyes, his own gaze securely fixed on the alpha's lips and the cup he was holding.

When the younger man moved his hand away with the cup, Hannibal huffed quietly. He felt a hint of disapproval and irritation, feeling a drop of liquid drip down his chin. How low had he fallen? How low had the FBI brought him?

No. Not the FBI. A very specific person he had before him.

The same person now looked around in embarrassment, glancing at the nightstand, but of course, there were no tissues or napkins. After a moment, he hesitantly wiped Hannibal's beard with his own sleeve. It was certainly unhygienic, but still definitely less rude than leaving him like that, which most people would probably do, unconcerned about such a detail. The mug in Will's hands was chipped. The interior of the room was incredibly sparsely decorated, the walls were made of wood.

Hannibal quickly concluded that the omega lived modestly.

"Do you, err... need anything?" he asked.

He seemed terribly lost. Watching him, Hannibal came to another conclusion. Will had had no plans to buy him and had no idea what to do. Hannibal narrowed his eyes and tilted his head slightly, not taking his gaze off him.
"A glass of wine and a valuable book would be pleasant, though, it could be difficult to enjoy them in current circumstances, thank you," he said. Hearing this, Will gaped, not expecting such an answer. However, he still did not meet the alpha's eyes.

"I have whiskey," he replied shortly.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly.

"Not fond of eye contact, are you?"

Will pursed his lips for a moment. "Eyes are distracting. You can see too much or don't see enough," he replied curtly. And then he left, followed by Hannibal's gaze. He returned a few minutes later with a book. Hannibal looked at it, intrigued.
"I hope it will be 'valuable' enough for your taste. You don't have much choice, since all my books are about criminology, fishing, or mechanics," he muttered, placing the book Mindhunter. Inside the FBI's Elite Serial Crime Unit. on the edge of the bed . "And you can't drink. You are on strong painkillers," he added.
"While I appreciate that, I don't require painkillers. I don't experience pain the way most people do. it will be bearable even in my current condition," replied the alpha, holding the book in his hand. One hand. He couldn't hold the book with both, chained to the bed as he was, so reading would be at least terribly uncomfortable, but possible.
Will felt indulgent, even though the omega in him also felt admiration for this alpha's strength.

"Well too bad, they're already in your system," replied Will. "You were in the hospital before they brought you here," he explained. He undoubtedly had to pay a lot for such a visit. The stitches on the alpha's body were done professionally, and the dressings were applied carefully. Hannibal couldn't help but feel surprised. most people wouldn't care about something like taking care of the health of a murderer. In the eyes of society, he was already dead. Omegas bought alphas like him temporarily, typically for a very specific purpose. And then they usually got rid of them.
"Thank you for the book. Was it your inspiration in catching me?" he asked as if it was the most casual topic in the world. Will raised an eyebrow at the question. Strange from his perspective.

"No. I didn't need help from any book to catch you," he replied calmly, but with a hint of self-satisfaction. As if it were a piece of cake, easy. Hannibal raised his eyebrows, and his gaze sharpened. Indignant at such an insinuation. "Maybe just your enormously big ego," Will added with amusement. It was easy to provoke Ripper by pretending that they had already caught him and attributing all his works to someone else. Hannibal exhaled through his nostrils but kept his mask on, although he visibly bristled.

"Well, the FBI was unable to perform the same action for years, so I believe it required some unique technique on your part. Quite impressive, I must say. Even if my own behavior must have been helpful."

Will felt pleased with the praise and suppressed it, knowing that the omega in him wanted to speak.

"I believe you want to use the bathroom. And I will have to change your bandages. Your stitches will be removed in a week."
Hannibal narrowed his eyes. Good. One week and then he will be able to get out of there, taking advantage of the fact that he would have to be taken to the hospital.

"I would be grateful. However, I must notice that it requires removing the security measures you're certainly emotionally attached to," he remarked, watching the omega. He raised his eyebrows slightly. "Are you planning on removing the chains? Your fear is, of course, understandable. You are an intelligent man after all."
Will frowned, dissatisfied, irritated, but did not deny it.

"They gave me one more 'security measure' I haven't used yet," he said and took the collar out of the drawer. Hannibal recognized it immediately as a shock collar. It delivers a painful electrical current at the press of a button alphas when they misbehave. "I will remove the chains but put the collar on before I do."
Hannibal felt… a hint of appreciation when he realized that omega had thought of such protection. The shock collar did not guarantee safety – especially with a high pain threshold. However, it certainly gave a moment to react, and besides, it caused a lot of pain, so omegas were happy to use them to punish purchased alphas.

"I would perceive using it as rude," he said, which was a simple, polite piece of information but sounded strangely like a warning when combined with the previous information Will had received.

Will flinched, feeling his heart beating faster. He narrowed his eyes slightly.

"Would?" he repeated.

"Considering the scenario when you use it, of course," Hannibal said, not taking his eyes off him. There was a difference between having a device and actually using it to shock you. "However, it's difficult to blame you. You seem afraid to be near me without such devices. Surprisingly so for the person directly responsible for putting me in this situation."
Will narrowed his eyes.

"I am not afraid of you. I'm just aware of our power imbalance and simply don't want to die. I really wouldn't want to use it," he replied. He leaned slightly over the bed, gripping his arm next to the shackles. Hannibal could reach it. He didn't move, however, merely observing the omega with attention.

"You've just simply described the fear of dying by my hands. I don't consider it an insult. It's perfectly natural to feel fear. It keeps many people alive."

The omega narrowed his blue eyes and looked straight into the scarlet counterparts of his captive alpha.

"I saved your life. I don't expect gratitude, but not being problematic would be nice. Will you cooperate or not?" he drawled quietly, leaning over the alpha. Hannibal sensed his natural scent. It was slightly muffled by suppressants but pleasant. Wild. Like the air after a storm, a forest during rain, but also something incredibly sweet, tempting hidden underneath. The whole thing was complemented by external scents, engine oil, fish, and dogs. Hannibal twitched his nostrils, having to admit that it was extremely... appetizing.
"Saving my life implies that it still belongs to me. On the contrary, it is now your property, and I, unfortunately, don't remember it being given back to me," the alpha noticed.
"Enslavement isn't particularly connected with the feeling of gratitude, Will. But I don't see any reason to hurt you."

No gesture of Will's had ever made Hannibal see him as rude. The fact that he was captured along with the FBI wasn't rude in itself.

Will looked openly skeptical. Somehow, he didn't believe in Ripper's lack of reasons.

"Well, sorry to inform you, but I'm a very rude person," he replied.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly and tilted his head. It was an unusual piece of information to share with the killer focused on rudeness.

"And I didn't enslave you. The government did. I just took you when they wanted to kill you. Paid a considerable amount. It's good that I bet against you while everyone else was sure you would win. I won a lot, thanks to your loss," he added, the last sentence delivered spitefully.

Hannibal withdrew his head slightly at the last words, as if offended by the mere suggestion that the omega had expected him to lose. Even though he had to know that it was obvious at that moment.

"Perhaps. However, it doesn't affect the fact that you, not the government, decide if I am chained or not in current circumstances." Will tilted his head slightly.

"Wrong," he replied. "They carried you from an ambulance to my house and they chained you themselves," he informed.

Will lifted the collar he was holding slightly.

"Now, would you mind raising your head? Unless you prefer to be chained to the bed indefinitely."
Hannibal was not at all pleased with the idea of wearing a collar. He was silent for a moment before he narrowed his eyes and lifted his head, allowing Will to fasten the collar.
Will looked at him before he carefully cinched the collar in place, adjusting it to lay snugly against his neck.

"Good boy," he replied without any intention of patronizing, but rather instinctively, having seven dogs. It was not strange to him. Hannibal must have sensed the lack of ill intention in his voice, but he still raised his eyebrows in doubt at the comment. Meanwhile, Will grabbed the remote. "I will have this with me, As well as my gun," he informed politely. And then he began to unfasten the chains that bound Hannibal to the bed. The alpha didn't move the entire

time, waiting patiently. He only moved when the last chain was unfastened, and the omega hadn't had time to withdraw his hand to reach for the remote again.
Despite his wounds, in one swift movement, he turned with Will so that he was pinned on his back underneath him on the bed, feeling the larger body above him. He screamed wildly, and a wave of bitter aroma burst into Hannibal's nostrils as the omega released pheromones in response to the terror. Omega widened his eyes, tense as a bowstring. He clearly expected the Ripper to tear his throat out now.
How could he be so naive? The alpha narrowed those wild, artificially controlled eyes at him. He flared his nostrils, inhaling the omega's scent. Judging by his scent, what emotions the movement stirred in him. Will squeezed his eyes shut as Hannibal's fangs approached his neck. His breathing quickened. He didn't struggle, he didn't kick, and he lay still, clearly expecting the worst. At the same time, his traitorous body reacted to being pressed to the bed by the alpha. Under the scent of fear, there was a very faint, subtle scent of natural arousal.

"Your suppressants are fading, Will," the alpha said after a moment, causing Will to open his eyes in surprise.
Huh?

"I suppose you must wish to take another dose."
And then he let go of Will, standing up. Perhaps he wanted to test how the omega would react to the prospect of danger. Or maybe he wanted to show that it wasn't weapons or electroshock remotes that could keep Will safe. He didn’t have a reason to hurt Will. Yet.

Will only sat up after a moment. He took a deep breath, completely flushed red in the face. The bedding smelled of the alpha very intensely, he was wounded after all. He swallowed hard, and then frowned.

"Don't you ever touch me again!" he growled and bared his fangs. He stood up. "The bathroom is down the hall. Towels are on the shelf," he said coldly, irritated, and stalked for the door, taking the remote with him. "You have an hour," he added and headed downstairs to the kitchen to prepare something to eat. He wasn't worried about a possible escape. They were upstairs andthe bathroom had no window. Hannibal watched him leave the room, his head tilted consideringly.

The unexpected scent of arousal was... interesting.

Will's reaction told him, however, that Will hadn't bought him out for breeding purposes, like many omegas did, wanting the genes of a strong alpha for their offspring. He also doubted that it was about torture. It seemed that Will himself had no idea why he had done it.

The alpha calmly set off in search of the bathroom, wanting to use the toilet and take a shower. He felt pain in his leg with every step, inevitably limping. He was only wearing pants.

He saw that the house was modest, although not small, but it lacked decoration and style. It was furnished simply and practically.

When he looked at himself in the mirror, he was stunned at the quantity of wounds, bruises, and contusions. He unwrapped the bandages for the bath but was pleased to seehe wounds

had been disinfected and properly stitched. If it weren't for that, they would certainly be risking infection, and he would feel much worse. He ran his hand along the stitches of his wound, examining his reflection. The omega clearly wanted him to be in good condition for some reason. Especially since Hannibal had seen the state of his house, his clothes, and the toiletries he used. Perhaps it wasn't poverty, but the omega was clearly not rich.

After leaving the bathroom, he smelled food coming from downstairs. He sniffed the air. His stomach twisted with hunger. After all, he hadn't eaten anything in days, and his body had used up a huge amount of calories in that time.

After going down the stairs, he entered the spacious living room, taking immediate notice of a pack of dogs. They looked at him curiously but didn't approach, not trusting the stranger. Hannibal looked askance at them. He had smelled their scent in the air earlier, but he still tilted his head when he saw how many there were. They were not purebreds. Strays?

Will was in the kitchen. He stood with his back to the entrance, stirring something in a pan. Hannibal smelled eggs. Hannibal watched him for a moment before he stepped deeper into the kitchen.

"May I have a glass of water?" the omega heard right behind him as if the alpha had sprung up out of nowhere. Not having heard him earlier or smelled his scent after the bath, Will turned around abruptly and stepped back with a groan of fear, pushing the frying pan with his butt. He leaned his hand against the stove instinctively and hissed, immediately withdrawing his burned hand. He brought it to his mouth and frowned.

"Don't sneak around like that!" he huffed. Sneaking up on someone with a gun and a shock collar remote control wasn't smart. On the other hand, drifting off with your thoughts when you had a dangerous serial killer in your house was even less smart. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, politely, but had to admit that he felt amused. Will moved and put his hand under the faucet. With the other, he reached for a mug, also chipped, with a dog pattern, and filled it with water from the tap. He handed it to Hannibal. "I don't have bottled water," to forestall any complaints when he gave the container a critical look, "but it's clean," he assured.

He held out his hand.

"Show me your hand, please."

Will raised his eyebrows in suspicion.

"What for?" he asked distrustfully. As if Hannibal wanted to bite off his hand. The omega knew he was capable of that. Hannibal was looking at him with condescension.

"I am a doctor, Will," he noted. Will had to be aware of that like no one else.

Will pursed his lips, hesitating.

"It's just a small burn," he muttered. He showed him his hand, observing him carefully, tense. His scent betrayed distress even from his earlier scare. Hannibal took his hand carefully and

examined the burn. The hand looked fine, apart from a slight redness.

"I apologize for scaring you with my arrival," he said. "If you don't have hydrocolloid ointment in your first aid kit, you can apply sliced cucumber to the skin. By the evening there should be no trace left." Will watched him, surprised by the apology. He took his hand away and nodded.

"I have a cucumber," he mumbled quietly.

He reached into the fridge. Inside were some containers of food, a bottle of ketchup, a few eggs, and a slightly rotten cucumber. Will made a compress out of it and tied it with tape.

The omega took the pan off the burner and used a spatula to transfer the scrambled eggs onto plates. Without any additions, no sausage, chives, or onion, just eggs and salt. On top of that a slice of dry bread. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly. Both portions looked the same though. The omega simply ate like that. He took both plates and left the kitchen, giving the alpha a look as he passed him. He headed into the living room and put both plates on the table, and next to them were forks, no knives. He sat down opposite Hannibal's portion and began eating, watching him carefully. The dogs, smelling the food, immediately milled around, wagging their tails and wanting to swindle a bite. Hannibal followed him, glancing at the dogs before taking a seat at the table opposite Will.

"Thank you," he said politely, not willing to complain. It was food after all and clearly, the omega had prepared it as best he could. "Do you often cook?"

Will snorted quietly in response to his question.
"Hardly at all. Mostly when I catch some fish," he muttered. "I wasn't prepared for… guests… so my fridge is empty," he added with his mouth full, eating rather quickly, without savoring it, because there was nothing to savor. Food was for not starving and having energy, that’s all.

He sighed and rubbed his forehead with his fingers. He was clearly tired.

"I need to figure out what to do with you," he muttered quietly. Hannibal tilted his head slightly, eating his own bread with an egg. He swallowed a bite.

"I suppose the idea of letting me go isn't in the cards?" Will looked at him as if he had to make sure he was serious.

"Besides the fact that you’re a serial killer, you’re officially mine now. Whatever you do, I’m responsible for your actions. So I’m sorry, but that is out of the question," he replied. If Hannibal attacked and killed someone, Will would go to prison.
The omega was taking a substantial risk buying such an alpha. Hannibal wasn't surprised and didn't seem angry about the refusal. It was Will who had originally captured him after all.

"I could take care of cooking if you’ll allow it," the alpha suggested. "I am a decent chef. Of course, some supplies would be helpful." Will grimaced slightly.

"Forgive me, but I believe that our diets are very different. I don't have your appetites," he replied, subtly suggesting that he didn't feel like eating anything prepared by a cannibal. The cannibal in question raised his eyebrows slightly.

"You may be surprised. The dinners that I hosted in my home were very popular," he said. He finished his portion. "And if you aren't about to surprise me, there is no human flesh in the house for you to be worried about being used as ingredients in the meals." Will thought about it, glancing at him. He had to admit that his meals were... pretty bad. If he ate at all.

"I don't need a cook," he said after a moment. "Actually... I don't need you for anything. I doubt you could help me fishing or fixing engines, repair things," he muttered to himself, unconsciously suggesting that Hannibal was useless and worthless to him. He didn't need a slave or even an employee. He liked to manage on his own.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Will approached Hannibal with the leash and cocked his head, raising his hands. "May I?"
Hannibal narrowed his eyes, but he certainly appreciated the polite question. He tilted his head slightly towards the omega, making it easier for him to fasten the leash.

Chapter Notes

Big thanks to my beta @Redeye17 <3
All mistakes are my fault!

Hannibal easily concluded that Will was a loner and didn't really know how to coexist with another person. The decision to buy the Ripper had been impulsive and ill-considered. If Will changed his mind, he could always sell him or give him away. Hannibal could end up in a much worse situation. Despite his dissatisfaction with the current one, Hannibal felt downright offended by the suggestion that he was useless.

"I believe there are some areas that I could be helpful in," he said. "Starting with your diet. Having cooked meals and a clean house would give you more time for your ‘fishing or fixing engines’. I suppose that you also spend long hours at work, leaving your dogs alone." Will looked up at him.

"It wouldn't give me more time since I don't clean and cook at all," he replied. "And my dogs are used to my absence and they don't feel alone since there are many of them," he added. He took a bite of bread. "I will think about some solution. Maybe there is any omega in need, too poor to acquire an alpha," he added thoughtfully. Hannibal couldn't stay here. Will didn't want to constantly look over his shoulder in his own home.

Surely if Hannibal went to another omega, he would be kept in chains, collared, and muzzled all the time. He wrinkled his nose slightly in disapproval.

"No, thank you. I would prefer not to. I am not fond of the idea of becoming a breeding toy", he replied, reaching out to grab omega's empty plate. He placed it on his own, taking both. "And the body count would most likely increase with such a solution," he added as if he were talking about it raining tomorrow. But the worst thing was that omega knew it was true. Few people had the tact, strength, and mental agility to handle the Chesapeake Ripper. "We can go

shopping for some ingredients in the morning since your fridge lacks anything of nutritional value. Don't make a decision without trying what I am suggesting."

Will looked at him with irritation, but let him gather the plates.

"You are not the one deciding here!" he huffed in irritation. "There are many ways to prevent feral alphas from killing. Better than an electric collar. I can't keep you here for cooking. You can't stay here. I live alone," he announced, running his fingers through his hair in frustration.

The fact that Will had no idea what he was doing cheered the alpha considerably. Well, it was hard to have bad intentions when you had none at all, and were lost in your own thoughts.

"Company may be beneficial for both your physical and mental health. And I can't help but notice that you have accumulated companionship for yourself quite often," the alpha said, looking at the group of dogs.

"Certainly not the company of a serial killer," Will grumbled. What was beneficial about that?

Will sighed heavily.

What had he gotten himself into? He had a bloody Ripper in the middle of his living room.

He stood up from the table.

"Come, I have to tend to your wounds," he muttered. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, turning his head in his direction.

"I was about to wash the dishes," he replied. "I believe it's the part of cleaning you sometimes do, considering the lack of paper plates around."

"Very funny. Do the dishes then, I will wait upstairs."

Hannibal washed all the dishes in a few minutes and, after a moment of consideration, replaced the water in the dogs' bowls, which looked like it had been standing for a few days before he followed Will upstairs to the room where he had slept. The omega took out bandages and disinfectant from the cabinet there.

"Sit," he ordered. Hannibal glanced at him but sat down on the bed politely. Will stood behind Hannibal and began to clean the stitches with a cotton swab, and then sealed them with dressings. His movements were calm and careful. Every now and then, by necessity, he ran his fingers over the alpha's body.

Hannibal narrowed his eyes slightly. He knew that the omega wanted to take care of him for some reason. There was a certain fear in his movements, a confusion about the situation, but there was no reluctance in them, which Will probably should have felt towards the serial killer.

When Will finished with his back, he circled Hannibal. "I believe you can take care of your front by yourself," he said. The alpha looked up at him.

"I believe I can. Thank you." Hannibal took the medical supplies from him so that he could take care of the other half of his body himself. He had to take off his pants to reveal the wounds on his legs. It was difficult for him to bend down in his current state, but he was undoubtedly very resistant to pain.

He looked up at the omega, standing in only his boxers. He tilted his head slightly, unwinding the bandage. ,"Why didn't you let me die, Will?" he asked suddenly.

Will tore his gaze away from Hannibal's body, having to admit that he liked what he saw. He raised his eyebrows at the question but wasn't surprised.

"...I ask myself the same question," he muttered quietly. "I just felt at that moment that I didn’t really want you dead," he added honestly. And then he left the room to escape further conversation under the pretext of giving the alpha privacy while he tended to the wounds. Hannibal followed him with a glance, narrowing his eyes.

Will returned fifteen minutes later with a mug in his hand. He placed it on the nightstand next to the bed.

"I will use only ankle chains for the night so you will be able to read and drink," he said quietly.

Hannibal gazed at Will impassively.

"You know well that killing someone in their sleep isn't part of my modus operandi," he noted calmly. Will remained silent, unable to deny it. Hannibal cocked his eyebrows.

"If you are afraid that I will try to escape, why not simply sleep with me in the same bed?" Hearing this suggestion, Will laughed mirthlessly, sounding a bit like a barking dog.

"You wouldn't want to sleep with me. I talk in my sleep, I kick the sheet, struggle and I sweat a lot," he replied. Hannibal tilted his head slightly.

"I'm sure it couldn't be that terrible. Your scent is actually quite delicious."
Will parted his lips to answer. It took a moment for him to realize what he had heard and froze. A blush slowly appeared on his face.

"...well, thank you," he replied, trying to keep his face blank and not show how embarrassed he felt. He cleared his throat, feeling the alpha's intense, uninterrupted gaze on him. "But it's terrible. I'm very wet at night," he added, unaware of how suggestive that sounded, combined with the fact that he was an omega. Hannibal raised his eyebrows higher, intrigued. He felt amusement that Will took his words sexually, blushing instead of being horrified by such a compliment from the cannibal's lips, but not his own.

"You escaping the bed wouldn't wake me up," Will muttered. "Please, lie down."
The alpha sighed but laid down on the bed without a fight especially since Will had asked so politely.

"So I believe I need to some way to wake you up in case of a need to visit the bathroom?" Will fastened his ankles to the legs of the bed. The manacles were lined with leather so they didn't dig painfully into the skin, and the chain was long enough for him to turn around.

"No," Will replied. And then he retrieved a jar out from under the bed and with an amused, malicious smile placed it on the nightstand. "You will be fine," he added and headed for the door. "G'night."
Hannibal raised his eyebrows skeptically, looking at the jar with disbelief and disapproval. Well, that was definitely rude. The alpha bristled with indignation. He had absolutely no intention of doing that.

"Good night, Will," the omega heard from behind, when he was already in the corridor.

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A long, lazy, and boring morning awaited Hannibal. He was used to getting up at dawn, sometimes even before, he didn't need much sleep. Will was different. The alpha had to wait for the omega to wake up, and sadly Will slept for a very long time, because his sleep was nervous, interrupted with nightmares, and not restorative. Hannibal had the impression that he could hear quiet whimpers from downstairs. It undoubtedly irritated the alpha's instincts. Fortunately, he was patient. He resisted the urge to use the toilet, having absolutely no intention of using the given jar, and focused on reading Will's book. Thankfully, it was a long read.

It was almost noon when Will came to him. He looked bad, disheveled, sweaty, and with bags under his eyes. His reaction time was certainly slowed down in such a situation.

"Mornin'," he mumbled under his breath. He radiated an off-putting aura. "Head," he grumbled, grabbing his collar. Hannibal flared his nostrils and raised an eyebrow slightly in response to this rude behavior, sweeping his gaze over him. He sat up.

"Good morning, Will," he said, closing the book on the last page. "It seems that you didn't sleep well."

"Hm?" Will mumbled questioningly, needing a moment to understand what the alpha was talking about. He shrugged, fastening his collar. He had the remote in his pocket. "Typical night. Told ya," he replied in a strange, irritating, southern accent, unbuckling Hannibal’s ankle. And then he left.

Hannibal looked after him, raising his eyebrows slightly. Where did Will suddenly get that accent? It sounded like Will was mutilating every word, sending shivers down the spine of a perfectionist like Hannibal.

He exhaled through his nostrils and went to use the bathroom and take a quick shower.

After going downstairs, Hannibal saw that the door was open and the dogs had been let out to run around the yard. Will was sitting at the table with his hands around a cup of coffee. The alpha observed a messy bed in the living room covered with rumpled, sweaty sheets. Next to the bed on the nightstand was a pack of aspirin. The alpha looked at it, analyzing the situation quickly. He flared his nostrils, smelling in addition to sweat, the cheapest instant coffee... and a noticeably distressed omega. Or maybe it was a scent lingering from the night?

He noticed that the omega didn't even have a nest anywhere in his home.

"Do you always sleep in the living room?" Hannibal asked. "It doesn't seem enjoyable."
Will nodded, not looking in his direction. He took a sip of coffee.

"Yeah," he mumbled. "I didn't use the second floor before you," he mumbled. Now Hannibal resided upstairs, basically having the whole place to himself.

He reached for the wasted sheets, wanting to change them for fresh ones and fold them. He looked up at Will.

"Where do you have a spare set of sheets?"

Hearing the question, Will looked at him in surprise. He waved his hand towards the dresser against the wall, watching the alpha. Hannibal had to open three drawers before he found the sheets. In the first one, he saw medicines, scent blockers, and heat suppressants. In the secondwere Will's clothes, several identical sets of socks, underwear, and t-shirts arranged next to each other. Gray, nondescript, heavily washed sheets were in the third drawer. Everything seemed to blend in with the surroundings, equally unattractive and bland.

Will watched expressionlessly as Hannibal changed his sheets for fresh ones, took the old ones to the washing machine, and opened the window to air out the bed. He didn't comment the entire time.

"Thanks," he said after the alpha finished, and rubbed his forehead with his fingers. He didn't even notice when the empty cup disappeared from his hand. When he opened his eyes, Hannibal was already handing him another one with freshly brewed, much more intense and pleasant-smelling coffee, although it had to be the same cheap stuff; after all, Will had nothing else in the house. He could hear the sound of the old washing machine working. Will raised his eyebrows when he saw it. He had the impression that only seconds had passed, but in fact, it must have been a few minutes. Minutes that escaped him, and which Hannibal could have used to kill him and escape. He gasped and took a drink of coffee.

"When did it start?" Hannibal asked, looking at the omega. "Your headaches."
Will frowned in thought, running his hand over his neck. He scratched his swollen scent gland, which immediately caught the alpha's attention.

"When I started to work on your case," Will replied after a moment. "I hoped it would pass after I solved it," he added. Hannibal tilted his head slightly. He sat down next to him and reached out his hand to slowly, calmly place it on the omega's forehead, assessing his temperature. Will flinched and opened his eyes wider, feeling the cool hand on his skin.

"Your head is burning. And your scent gland looks swollen," Hannibal said. He flared his nostrils. "May I check it?" he asked, extending his hand, but not yet touching the scent gland itself. It was a very sensitive part of the omega's body.

Will sputtered, understanding what Hannibal wanted to do. He immediately moved back in his chair, pushing his hand away from his. "What? No! I told you not to touch me," he huffed, frowning. He bristled defensively. A moment of inattention would be enough for him to be bitten. "I'm fine," he added, taking a sip of a coffee.

Even from a greater distance, Hannibal caught a weak tone of the sweet scent of fever. He tilted his head, knowing that Will was far from being "fine."

"I will make something for breakfast," Will muttered, despite knowing he had almost nothing left to eat. It would probably be much worse than yesterday's scrambled eggs with dry bread.

"Go to your dogs," Hannibal ordered him. There was only one exit from the house, so Will would naturally keep an eye on it anyway. "I will take care of the breakfast. It's lunch hour right now and you don't seem well, you need to eat something filling."

Will looked at him distrustfully, but he had no desire to make anything to eat and was half-conscious, so he nodded and headed for the door. He stood there, still in his shorts and a t-shirt despite the cold outside, with the mug of coffee in his hands.

Hannibal searched Will's entire kitchen. He found a few eggs, a can of tomatoes, frozen sausage, and old pasta. And of course, dog food, which he didn't count. It wasn't much, but it could be used to make something reminiscent of Italian cuisine based on pasta with tomato sauce. He checked the dates of all the products before he started cooking. It took him about twenty minutes.

"Will," he called from the house when the table was already set. "The lunch is ready. Come, please."

Will hadn't moved the entire time, deactivated, his gaze fixed straight ahead. He flinched, torn from his thoughts, when he heard Hannibal. He grabbed the mail from the mailbox in front of the house and went back inside. He sat down at the table and looked down at the plate. He saw spaghetti in tomato sauce with sausage, garnished with a soft-boiled poached egg, and sprinkled with dried basil that Hannibal had managed to dig out from somewhere. He raised his eyebrows at the dish that actually looked like a real meal. His nostrils flared, smelling the delicious aroma.

"You actually made something decent," he remarked, surprised. Hannibal smiled in response to the compliment. He placed a cup of herbal tea in front of Will and handed him cutlery.

"Spaghetti Marinara with sausage and poached eggs," he introduced the dish. It wasn't fancy, but it looked and smelled delicious. "Please, enjoy," he added before he sat down at the table across from him. Will was surprised. He grabbed his fork.

For a moment, the thought of poison occurred to him, but he remembered that he didn't even have rat poison at home. So he started eating. He mumbled quietly.

"It's good," he praised. He hadn't eaten something this delicious in his own home for a long time. It was obvious that the omega was hungry and had nutritional deficiencies because he devoured the pasta rather quickly. Finally, he licked his lips and nodded in thanks. "I will buy some groceries. You can make me a list," he said, which was clearly an agreement to Hannibal's proposal to cook.

The alpha smiled. He seemed pleased with the opportunity to provide and the fact that the omega liked his food.

"You can cook... until I figure out what to do with you," Will added. There would be no problem if Hannibal were an ordinary criminal. However, he was the worst of them. No one would want him, and the only places that accepted such pathologies ended sooner or later with the death of the alphas. Hannibal was undoubtedly aware of this. He raised his eyebrows slightly.

"I thought we'd already discussed this topic," he said. He began to clear the dirty dishes from the table.

"And I told you you can’t stay here, I can’t keep the Ripper in my house," Will replied. It was crazy and impossible.

He reached for the mail and began to unpack the envelopes. He glanced at them all with disinterest, tossing them aside. Bills, taxes, advertisements. But he froze suddenly at the next letter. His scent had changed noticeably, betraying his agitation and he gasped in disbelief.

"Oh shit," he whispered. Hannibal stopped at the entrance to the living room, wiping his hands on a cloth. He raised an eyebrow in question.

"Did something happen?"

The omega looked at him, and then, instead of explaining, simply handed him the letter. The alpha stepped closer to grab it. It was a government letter from the Alpha Control Department informing that Will, along with acquiring Hannibal's property rights, had also acquired his entire estate of thirty-five million dollars, his Baltimore estate and office, and other properties registered under Lecter’s name. Hannibal wasn't surprised. After all, he knew how it all worked. His life had literally been bought by the omega sitting in front of him. He gave the letter back to Will, looking at him.

"Well, that certainly makes it easier to take care of proper groceries," he noted. He raised his eyebrows slightly. "I assume you didn't know you would receive everything I had?" Will stared at him in shock.

"No," he replied. Surely if anyone knew how much money the Ripper had, people would be fighting over him. But that information was deliberately hidden. If Hannibal died while he was government property, his estate would also remain government property.

The omega didn't understand why Hannibal was so calm about it.
"…we can go to your house if you want to take any of your things and bring them here," he offered after a moment. Hannibal looked up at him. He smiled sadly.

"Now those are your belongings. I lost them the moment the court sentenced me," he noted. Will sighed heavily.

"Only officially. I don’t want them. I just offered for you to have them," he replied.

"It would be pleasant to have some of them around, however difficult to perform. Most are piecesof heavy antique furniture made of solid wood or stone, art pieces, sculptures, old unique books, and kitchen equipment. Lots of my drawings as well. You would be pleased with the Cuban and Brazilian coffee, as well as the Scotch whiskey that I have there," he said. He looked at the omega more carefully and smiled. "You truly had no idea about how the alpha slave market works, did you, Will?"

Hearing this, Will felt embarrassed, as if he were a small, helpless child. He scratched his head and shrugged. "I was never interested in alphas at all," he grumbled. To be precise, the omega wasn't interested in humans at all. He looked away. "I have thirty million now, I think it will be enough to pay for the transport of everything you want. The second floor is empty, you can arrange it however you want," he replied. Upstairs there were three rooms, a bathroom and an entrance to the attic. Hannibal tilted his head slightly. He didn't ask why the omega hadn't used this floor, only knowing it wasn't because of him. Still, giving a slave half the house was quite a gesture.

"I will appreciate that," he said. He returned to the kitchen. The omega saw him wiping the freshly washed knife he had used to cut the sausage on a cloth. "I also have a yacht. It's not a part of my official belongings, since it's under one of my different names. You can have it as an act of my gratitude. I will write down the location of it for you," he added in a tone as if he were talking about an old pair of shoes, focused on his task. He was cleaning years of grime from the stove that Will had ignored. "It should be suitable for your fishing."

Will raised his head in surprise, glancing at him. He raised his eyebrows. He was not surprised that the man had many names, aliases, and probably much more wealth under other names than his official one, for safety.

"Huh?" he gasped. "Well… thank you, but I don’t know where I would keep it. Usually, I fish from the stream," he replied. It would definitely be nice to have a yacht, though. Just for the sake of having one. After all, he was excited about boats, all kinds of them.

He stood up.

"Make me a grocery list, please," he said, placing a notebook and pen on the table. Hannibal nodded slightly and started taking notes.

Meanwhile, Will himself headed to the bathroom. He came back dressed in brown jeans and a similarly colored flannel shirt. He had taken a shower because the smell of sweat had disappeared, replaced by the smell of cheap cologne. He was wearing glasses. Despite being an omega, he looked more like a beta, one who simply wanted to blend in with the crowd and not stand out in any way. Hannibal suspected that the omega had very specific reasons for this, more than was immediately apparent.

"Okay. I'm going shopping," Will informed him. "...I have to restrain you." Hannibal raised his eyebrows skeptically, not happy with this.

"I actually thought that we might go together," he suggested. "I am not certain if you know how to pick proper avocado or kiwano." Will raised his eyebrows in question.

"What's kiwano?" he asked. But then he shook his head and frowned before the alpha could answer. "You can't go with me. Everyone knows your face. People would panic. And if you do something or run away, I would be screwed," he stated firmly. "Well, forgive me but I don't trust you at all."

"Will, since I have been here, I have had exactly sixteen opportunities to effortlessly kill you. I think it's enough to show my intentions. I also believe I know well how to act in public," he replied. It was very much out of character for him to attack someone in the middle of a street like a wild animal. "Other people's rude reactions are not in my sphere of influence, unfortunately."

Will looked at him indignantly at that. "Or you want me to think that you don't have bad intentions, but in fact, you want to put my guard down," he accused, frowning. Hannibal even pulled his head back slightly, looking deeply hurt by the accusation. Will sighed. "You will have to be collared and leashed, you know that, right?" he asked rhetorically. He wasn't the one making the law. Hannibal didn't even blink at that, but he knew from the question that he had won.

"Of course," he said. "Everything for dear society's peace of mind."

It's still better than being chained in one position for who knows how many hours, waiting like a dog in a kennel. Even the omega’s actual dogs had more freedom.

Will raised a skeptical eyebrow at that. He sighed and went to get the leash that had been delivered to him along with the rest of the "equipment" for feral alphas.

"Do you have any wishes for meals?"

Will shrugged at that question.

"I am not picky. Just not human meat, please," he muttered, as if it were available on the store shelf, next to the chicken and pork. Hannibal smiled in amusement at the comment.

"I may try."

Will approached Hannibal with the leash and cocked his head, raising his hands. "May I?" Hannibal narrowed his eyes, but he certainly appreciated the polite question. He tilted his head slightly towards the omega, making it easier for him to fasten the leash.

The omega clasped it to his collar, then wrapped it around the alpha's neck like a scarf, clearly not intending to use it too soon. Hannibal raised his eyebrows, surprised at the sight, but he was by no means going to complain about it.

"Because of... the nature of your crimes you also have to be muzzled in public," Will muttered, lifting the muzzle in his hand. "Are you sure you want to go?"

Hannibal smiled subtly, mirthlessly. "You keep forgetting that it isn't anything the people around haven't already seen me in, Will," he noted. The image of him tied up and in a mask-muzzle was even broadcast live after all. The court trial had been well publicized. "Please, proceed."

Will nodded. He frowned. Why did he care so much about the comfort of this cruel, psychopathic, cannibalistic serial killer whose crimes kept him awake at night? Why did he care? Was it out of fear that the alpha would hurt him, or was there another reason?

He put on his muzzle and fastened it behind his head. He stepped back and looked at him, unaware that his eyes were shining. He had to admit that, knowing how strong and feral this alpha could be, the sight was pleasant.

For a moment, he felt the urge to keep Hannibal at home like this. Hannibal, on the other hand, saw the change in his gaze. He tilted his head slightly and wiggled his nostrils, sensing a subtle, almost imperceptible... sweetness in the omega's scent.

"Are you enjoying the view?" he asked him. Although he knew the answer, he wanted to see his reaction.

Surprisingly, he didn't see the omega's embarrassment.

"I pretty much am, yes," Will confirmed, lifting the corner of his mouth. He headed for the door. "Let’s go," he said. He said goodbye to the dogs and grabbed his house and car keys. He headed to his old Volvo parked in front of the shed and got into the passenger seat. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly in surprise, realizing he was expected to drive.

"I thought you still had some of the trust issues you’ve mentioned, Will," he noted, getting behind the wheel. He buckled his seat belt slowly. He could very easily kill someone with the vehicle or cause an accident and escape in the chaos.

Will looked at him skeptically.

"I assure you I do. I will have much more control over observing you than the road," he replied, fastening his seat belt.

The road was short from Will’s remote location to the store. He took Hannibal to a small, out-of-town store, showing him the way. It didn’t look inviting or stocked with good quality merchandise, but at least it wasn’t Walmart. Hannibal had to take this as the first step in the right direction and not grumble.

When they got out, Will locked the car and approached the alpha.

"I have to carry the leash now," he muttered. He didn't look like he wanted to. Well, it drew attention, which he didn't like. He adjusted his glasses nervously. Hannibal narrowed his eyes, catching the gesture.

He knew for sure that Will hadn't caught him for fame. The omega seemed to be afraid of any attention. He hid behind his glasses and tried at all costs to blend into the background. To be invisible.

Hannibal bowed his head to look the omega in the eye, gently, subtly placing a hand on his shoulder.

"I believe the way I am dressed is drawing attention itself," he noticed, seeing the omega's nervous posture. Nearly all the eyes of every person in the area were already fixed on them.

Will flinched, surprised by both the touch and the strange words of... support? But most of all, he was surprised that the insensitive psychopath had sensed what the problem was. He had discerned Will's weakness.

"I don't think that the leash would be predominant in this picture."

The omega's insecurity made the alpha instinctively feel the need to comfort him, even if it was he who was in a worse position himself. Well, anyone with access to television at home had already seen him in that humiliating situation anyway.

Hannibal unwound the leash and handed the end to Will.

"Come, please," he said, opening the door to the store for the omega. The shopping list was long.

Will looked at him in surprise before he squeezed the leash and nodded, entering first.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

> "Hello, Alana," he said politely, not taking his eyes off the woman. "I see you went looking for dinner as well."

Chapter Notes

> As always big thanks to @Redeye17 for beta!
>
> Please, enjoy!

Will was tense and smelled of a distressed omega. Everyone was looking at them, whispering. Well, at least he didn't have to struggle in the crowd, because people were literally running away, avoiding them. The store had strangely emptied out a few minutes after they entered.

The frightened security guard followed them, keeping his distance. Hannibal, on the other hand, walked straight, calmly, ahead of Will, searching for the necessary products from his list. He completely ignored the terrified looks of people running away from them and whispering behind their backs. Unfortunately, he couldn't afford to stock up on lamb for the freezer.

Will followed him, pushing the cart.

"Why do we need six kinds of pasta, four kinds of rice, and three kinds of flour? And what is this shit?" Will asked grumpily, poking his finger at the kimchi with tofu, sesame, and wakame. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly and turned his head in his direction.

"Different dishes require different kinds of ingredients to reach the full taste potential," he explained. His lips twitched subtly. "And this, my dear Will, is kimchi. A Korean fermented spicy cabbage. It's wonderful. I will make homemade ones soon, however, it requires time." Will rolled his eyes, hearing all this.

"I don't have to eat all of this," he muttered.

Their cart was full and heavy, Will had difficulty pushing it behind the alpha, and he was not a weak man.

"I don't have money for all this, I paid everything I had for you. Can we go already? The guard may start to cry at any minute."

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, and narrowed his eyes, shifting his gaze to the aforementioned man.

"Excuse me, sir," he said politely, addressing the guard practically hidden behind the shelf. Hannibal was a head taller than him. "Could you show us where we can find the meat, please? It's so difficult to find a decent source."

Will cocked one eyebrow, watching them sceptically. He looked expectantly at the security guard, who flinched and stepped back, looking at the omega, silently begging for help, but it didn't come. So finally the man pointed in the direction and ran away, disappearing between the shelves. They weren't paying him enough for this shit. Will stared at Hannibal.

"Did you enjoy it?" he asked, unamused. Hannibal himself smiled in amusement, looking not like a murderer, but a little boy who had played an innocent prank.

"I could enjoy it more, inviting him to dinner. However, current circumstances are unfortunately limiting."

Will should have been terrified or at least disgusted by these jokes. Instead, he only sighed. He pushed the cart in the indicated direction.

"Didn’t know you invited strangers who you met at the store to dinner."

Suddenly, a second cart came out from behind the aisle. Both of them collided into each other, Will heard a surprised female gasp.

"Oh, I'm sorry..." a familiar voice mumbled.

Will stiffened, feeling a growing note of panic. He clenched his fists on the handlebar, desperately wondering what to do.

Hannibal, who had lingered just behind, raised his eyebrows slightly, shifting his gaze to the cause of the collision. He froze for a moment. Then he tilted his head slightly.

"Hello, Alana," he said politely, not taking his eyes off the woman. "I see you went looking for dinner as well."

The woman stiffened. A shiver ran across her skin, and she felt that for a moment she couldn’t breathe. She looked slowly first at Will, who was standing closer, and then at Hannibal, feeling a growing sense of horror.

She swallowed.

"...what the hell is he doing here, Will?" she asked, trying to keep her tone calm and cold, but she was clearly terrified.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows further. How rude.

Will took a deep breath.

"Shopping," he replied shortly. He felt like sinking into the ground. "I... I bought him..." he began.

"You WHAT?!" Alana shouted.

The omega was silent. He had nothing to defend himself with. He didn't even know why he had done it. Hannibal flared his nostrils, smelling the bitterness in his scent. He felt discomfort at the fact that the omega was clearly distressed and overwhelmed by the situation. He put his hand on Will’s shoulder.

"It's rude to raise your voice, Alana. Will did the FBI an incredible favor, since I am the only person able to close many of their unsolved cases. And enabledthe analysis of the mind of the world's most famous cannibal," he said proudly. As if that was exactly what he wanted. His voice didn't even tremble, calm and confident the whole time. Well, it wasn't a lie. Although Hannibal had so far firmly refused to interview any psychiatrists who wanted to obtain material for their books.

So he had chosen to reconsider just to provide Will with a comfortable excuse.
The omega’s eyes widened slightly but he refrained from looking at Hannibal so as not to expose the truth.

"That's correct... We still haven’t identified many victims, and there's much we still don't know," he said, picking up on the alpha's idea. Alana was still looking at them indignantly, but this argument seemed to get through to her.

"But why is he... here, shopping, not caged like the wild monster he is?" she asked sharply. Hannibal narrowed his eyes.

"I didn't trust that he wouldn't escape if I left him alone, I preferred to take him with me. He is muzzled and collared as you can see, I have my gun and a remote," Will mumbled. He dug the remote out of his pocket and showed it to the woman. "I have everything under control," he assured nervously. Putting the remote in his pocket, he accidentally pressed the button.

Hannibal, not expecting anything at that moment, suddenly doubled over as a strong shock of electricity ran through the collar. It had to be strong to temporarily disable the alpha, so it was more powerful than some stun guns.

Hannibal instinctively bared his fangs in a growl, and the hair on the back of his neck bristled. He stayed on his feet, resistant despite everything, but had to hold on to the wine rack.

Will froze and looked at him in shock, disoriented at first. He had to restrain his reaction from Alana, unable to show his concern.

The woman smiled with satisfaction, seeing this, reassured. "Please be safe, Will. And get rid of him as soon as possible," she said. She looked at the alpha. "I hope we won't meet again," she announced and moved forward, pushing the cart. Hannibal narrowed his eyes, breathing

heavily and unevenly, still bent over, but followed Alana with an intense, dangerous gaze. Only then did Will reach out to the bent, panting Hannibal, leaning against the fridge.

"Damn... I... I am sorry, I didn't... It was an accident... Are you okay?" he asked. Hannibal was still weak and injured, and the shock must have been even more painful and more pronounced through the wounds. The alpha closed his eyes, surprised by this expression of... sincere concern. Will was really concerned and scared that something could happen to Hannibal.

He shook his head slightly and slowly straightened up. Blood leaked from one of his bandages.

"It's alright," he reassured the omega, feeling his distress. Instinctively, he released his own calming pheromones. "However, I must say that it was the most aggressive ‘thank you for your help’ I've ever received."

He exhaled through his nostrils and looked in the direction Alana had gone. Surprisingly, he wasn't angry at Will at all, even though he was the one who electrocuted him. All of those emotions were redirected to Alana. Will could feel his murderous urge, which was a contrast to the alpha's calm and gentle emotions towards him. He looked at him confused, his nostrils flaring. He could feel both Hannibal's emotions and his scent. At the same time, his instincts wanted to inhale those calming pheromones, but they also bristled nervously when the omega felt that murderous urge.

"Yes... I... thank you for that," he mumbled and swallowed. Will caught the scent of blood and twitched nervously. "Fuck," he whispered. "Come on, let's go back home," he ordered.

***

"Did you really mean that?" Will asked quietly. They were already back home. The omega was fixing the stitches on Hannibal's shoulder, which had been torn by his sudden movement after the electrocution. He was sitting behind him in a chair with a needle in his hand. The alpha was no longer muzzled, the leash had also been unfastened. "All those analyses, unknown victims…"

Hannibal narrowed his eyes, feeling the omega’s fingertips move just next to his wound. He sat there obediently, allowing himself to be stitched up, although Will was doing it rather clumsily. Hannibal appreciated his efforts, though. Besides, stitching himself up in a place like that would be practically impossible.

"Well, I did promise our dear Alana that. And I keep my promises," Hannibal replied. Alana would certainly not let go of the topic and would share the information with everyone. However, Hannibal was aware of that when he saved Will with this excuse. "I expect they will want the interrogation to happen."

Will sighed quietly. "This is one of the reasons I didn't want you to come with me," he muttered. He wouldn't have peace now. "But thank you, I appreciate it," he added. The fact that Hannibal knew that the omega had no idea why he bought him embarrassed him.
He finished stitching and cut the thread, then sealed the wound with a fresh bandage.

"Done. You will live," he muttered with amusement and stood up, taking the first aid kit from the table. Hannibal smiled to himself.

"Thank you," he said. He stood up, letting out a quiet groan. "You seem very worried about other people's opinions, Will."

Will looked away, not wanting to stare at the alpha's naked torso, covered in wounds and scars, overlaid with dark hair. He could feel the strong muscles under the alpha's skin, which he had tensed while sewing. He swallowed.

"I don't. They don't have to like me or respect me, I don't care. I just want them to leave me alone," he muttered quietly.

Hannibal tilted his head slightly.

"People leave you alone under only two circumstances: when you live according to their rules... or when you show you are strong enough to set your own. It's simpler to just fit in, even if you are not a piece of the puzzle created in a way suitable for fitting."

Will smiled mirthlessly.

"I don't fit anywhere," he mumbled softly, not wanting to delve into the subject. "Go make dinner or something, I didn't buy all this weird shit for nothing," he added gruffly and left the living room.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, looking after him with amusement, even though Will was clearly very rude.

The omega always ran away when a topic became too difficult. The alpha didn't push it, though.
He got to work, and soon delicious smells began to waft from the kitchen. After a little over an hour, Hannibal called Will over to the already set table.

"Kimchi-jjigae, Korean sour cabbage stew topped with melted cheese and braised pork," he began introducing the dishes, "Korean fried chicken finished with a sweet sesame glaze, fluffy vegetable Omurice, and Hwajeon, that are pan-fried rice cakes with honey and edible rose petals."

Everything looked delicious and smelled even better. The table was almost bending under the weight of the food. Will sat in shock, overwhelmed by the variety, his gaze wandering about, not knowing what to land on. He flared his nostrils, savoring the scent of the dishes.

"I also took it upon myself to prepare homemade meals for all the dogs," the alpha added at the very end. The dogs were eating at their bowls with such energy that their ears were

trembling.

Will looked in their direction, eyebrows raised. He gasped.

"Woah," he said, rubbing his forehead with his fingers. "You know, it’s only the two of us, we don’t need such a big feast," he added. However, his stomach twisted with hunger, disagreeing with his words.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, and after a moment he smiled proudly.
"I see a lot of reasons. It is healthy to celebrate a shared meal. Also, you haven’t enjoyed proper meals for too long and you simply need more nutrition. Please, enjoy."

Will tried the strange looking thing Hannibal called ‘kimchi’ warily.

"Weird," he commented. "But good," he added. "Thanks," he said and tried chicken with vegetables. He didn't use the knife that was on the table, shoving the food into his mouth rather quickly, not chewing thoroughly, and swallowing large portions. Like someone who usually had to eat fast and never for pleasure.

Hannibal tilted his head and squinted slightly. He noticed this behavior and understood it without commenting. He ate slowly, bite by bite, distracting the omega from time to time with a drink or conversation, to subconsciously persuade him to eat slower, to give Will a chance to enjoy the flavors.

After finishing the meal, Will leaned back in his chair with a groan and patted his bulging belly.

"That was great but I am not going to go for groceries every three days," he pointed out.
Hannibal smiled slightly, pleased that Will liked his cooking so much. He would gladly prepare twice the amount for Will to see his pure satisfaction.

"We can order groceries online, it will be delivered fresh every few days," he suggested. "It's a convenient way of buying ingredients. Fresh meat as well."

Will looked at Hannibal, surprised. It took a moment to process what he had said. He gasped, realizing that he meant the couriers.

"Not funny," he muttered, not amused. He scratched his cheek. "I, uh... I will try to organize something," he added and got up to help carry the dishes to the kitchen. Hannibal only smiled, entertained by his own joke.

When Hannibal finished cleaning up and washing up after their meal and returned to the room, he saw the omega asleep, curled up on the carpet in front of the extinguished fireplace, surrounded by dogs. The alpha's collar remote lay forgotten, far out of reach on the table. So much for the precautions against the Ripper. Will must have been incredibly sleep-deprived. Since he didn't have a nest, apparently the dogs were his substitute. Hannibal knew that such behavior from the omega was only praise for him - the omega felt safe, full, and sleepy. Hannibal was happy to be able to provide for him.

He shook his head slightly and reached for a soft blanket on the couch. He threw it over the omega so that he wouldn't get cold. In doing so, he also left a trace of his presence. The moment the material touched his body, and for a moment he was surrounded by the Ripper's scent, Will purred quietly, omegan way, only for a second, before he buried himself under the blanket, burying his face in the dog's fur. Hannibal stared at this and frowned, tilting his head.

That was... incredibly interesting.

His lips twitched subtly.

When Will woke up, it was already late, the sun had long set, and the interior of the house was bathed in darkness. Will gasped and jumped to his feet, his heart beating faster. To his surprise, he wasn't hurt, tied up, or hurt. He grabbed the remote from the table, drew his weapon from the nightstand, and quietly moved deeper into the darkened house. He sniffed, looking for any sign of the alpha, expecting the worst. The house was spotlessly clean and unusually quiet. Will felt his heart leap into his throat as the scent led him to the open door.

He saw the alpha sitting on the porch, sipping cocoa from a chipped mug, with his back to the omega. He didn't turn around, but somehow still caught his scent.

"Hello, Will," he said. "If you want to walk around with a raised gun, I would recommend at least checking if it's loaded."

Pointing a gun at him was certainly considered rude.

Will stopped in surprise at the threshold.
The fact that the alpha had perceived him could be explained by his sharp senses, but how did he know that Will had a gun in his hand?

Will raised his eyebrows, then frowned in irritation. He checked the gun’s magazine.

"Why would you take my bullets?" he asked with irritation, but also without understanding. After all, the omega wasn't trying to hurt the alpha in any way. He only had a gun to defend himself. If Hannibal took away his ability to defend himself, it meant that he had malicious intentions toward him.

"You had a stressful day," Hannibal replied. "And you already used one weapon today out of pure nerves."

Hearing this, Will gasped with indignation.

"My finger just slipped! I've never used a gun 'by accident'!" he huffed.

Hannibal turned his head toward Will and held out the bullets to him to hand them over. He took another sip of cocoa.

"How did you sleep?"

"Not your business!" Will replied angrily, bristled. He snatched the clip from him and began to put it in its place. "It's not your job to tell me if my day was stressful or not. Do not

patronize me," he drawled, thrown off balance. He was not some weak, absent-minded omega who needed to be protected from himself. "Don't do it ever again. And now go to your room, please," he added coldly.

Hannibal tilted his head slightly, looking at the agitated, clearly distressed omega. He rose and stood right in front of him, closely. Sensing this, Will tensed defensively, bristling, but he did not take a step back or move his eyes off his weapon to watch alpha carefully like some sort of victim watching a predator.

"Alright. And I apologize," Hannibal said.

Will said nothing. He knew that taking those bullets was not an expression of concern, but a show of superiority. After all, all Will did was fall asleep. Like almost every day. Nothing to worry about.

He loaded the gun and put it in his belt. Hannibal looked the omega in the eye.

"You seem to be distressed. May I prepare you a cup of cocoa as well before I go upstairs?"

Will snorted, his gaze was both icy and agitated.

"I am not distressed, I'm angry! And if I wanted, I would make cocoa for myself by myself," he replied. "Go upstairs."

Hannibal tilted his head, watching Will for a moment. He wondered why Will really believed that it was the lack of a weapon that was a threat to him at this point and not being completely defenseless against the alpha during so many hours of deep sleep. If Hannibal wanted to, he could have done anything during those hours. However, he politely headed upstairs, not commenting on the omega's behavior.

Will followed him. He waited, standing next to the bed until the alpha used the bathroom. He preferred not to sit on it. It smelled intensely of strong alpha pheromones. When Hannibal returned, Will twitched. He lifted the chains and anklets he was holding.

"Lie down."

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, pointedly, and with a hint of indulgence.

"I am just curious," he said, lying down on the bed. "Do you truly believe they are necessary or are you trying to punish me for not executing the expectation of killing you and leaving? Tell me, Will."

Will looked at him annoyed.

"I am just acting responsibly," he replied firmly. "I shouldn't have fallen asleep in the first place, but I am not going to repeat that mistake," he stated. He fastened the cuff around one ankle. "And by taking my bullets, you showed that you can't be trusted," he added.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly at this ambitious conclusion. After all, he could have killed the omega, but he hadn't.

Will tied the alpha's other leg and headed for the door with a quiet "good night".

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Again, Hannibal heard Will from downstairs in the middle of the night. Like an omega’s whining—quiet and scared. He closed his eyes, unable to ignore it, much less sleep, when all his instincts were on alert. He looked at his bound ankles and exhaled through his nostrils.

He knew that this would last for long hours, probably until noon, when the omega would wake up.

Finally, he sighed and reached for the book he was reading, for hidden inside was a nail file that Alana had dropped in the shop when their carts collided. He stood up to calmly undo his shackles, using the file like a lockpick. He didn't think he would use it on the first day. Especially for such a reason.

He put the file back in its place and quietly went downstairs to check the omega's condition.

Will was sleeping, but not well. His brows were furrowed, and the room was filled with the smell of distress and sweat. The omega was completely wet, his clothes were soaked, his skin was shiny, and his hair stuck to his forehead. Will was tossing and turning on the bed, shivering.

"YhHhnNm..." he whimpered. His hands were clenched into fists. He looked like he was in heat, but it was clearly not heat. Hannibal flared his nostrils, immediately discerning the sweet, subtle scent of fever and illness. He wrinkled his nose slightly.

The omega was clearly not fine. And he had enough experience as a doctor to know that he would not be able to help Will here without professional equipment.

He put on the collar and mask by himself, and attached a leash to the collar. And then he went to Will and leaned over him to carefully, gently lift him into a sitting position. Next to him, he placed a cup of water he had brought and a compress prepared to put on omega's forehead.

"Will," he said gently, wrapping his hand around his hot, almost scalding face. "We need to take you to the hospital right now."

Will groaned quietly. He opened his eyelids, but only for a moment. He didn't fully wake up or regain consciousness. He closed his eyes again immediately and, with a groan, snuggled up to Hannibal. He pressed his face into his chest and wrapped his arms around his neck like a child around a stuffed animal, seeking comfort. The alpha's scent was calming because he stopped tossing, his face smoothed, and his breathing steadied. Hannibal twitched, surprised at first, stiffening for a moment. But then he relaxed his muscles and deliberately released his

pheromones to surround the omega with them soothingly.
He stroked his sweaty hair.

"Very well," he whispered. He wrapped the end of the leash around Will's wrist and placed a compress on his hot forehead, then took him in his arms. He remembered where the omega kept his car keys, so he retrieved them quickly, still holding Will in his arms. Finally, he hastily grabbed Will a change of clothes.

He took him to the car and sat him in the passenger seat. He buckled him in like a child before starting the car to take him straight to the emergency room.

***

An alpha bringing an omega to the hospital was already a surprise by itself and it wasn't a natural occurrence. Alphas weren't allowed to drive and they didn't really have the freedom to take their master in their arms and leave the house. However, the fact of who this alpha was caused a real panic. Security guards from all over the hospital immediately rushed there, pointing their weapons at him. Will was taken from him, and when one of the nurses found the remote control in his pocket, they didn't hesitate to use it, even though Hannibal didn't resist nor show any hostility. He was electrocuted several times before being dragged to the isolation room.

Will was examined, scanned, his blood was tested. He was given medication and put to bed. He woke up after many hours, and when he realized, after regaining consciousness, that he wasn't at home, he sat up abruptly, panicking. Did Hannibal kidnap him and imprison him somewhere?! His mind instantly leapt to the worse-case scenario.

A nurse quickly appeared next to him.

"Mr. Graham, how are you feeling?" she asked. Will looked at her in shock. He immediately understood that he must be in the hospital. But what happened? He couldn't remember anything.

"What happened?"

"You are very sick, Mr. Graham. We had a wide examination. You have brain inflammation. It's very advanced already and if it weren't for such a quick reaction, there would be irreversible damage to your brain," she explained.

Will sat frozen, and his heart beat faster. Quick reaction...?

"How did I get here?" he asked. The woman gasped in fear.

"That... alpha. That killer brought you here," she said. Will's eyes widened.

"Where is he now?"

"He’s confined, we-...

"What? Bring him here, now!" Will huffed, feeling concern for Hannibal, who was wounded after all, but also anger. That someone had touched his property.

"But he-…"
"...is mine," Will finished sharply. "And I did not consent to locking him up. Bring him to me immediately or I will sue this whole hospital," he threatened.

The nurse pursed her lips. Then she nodded and, without a word, turned and left. Hannibal was brought in shortly thereafter, accompanied by four guards, two of whom were dragging him and two more holding guns pointed at him. The nurse was walking behind them with the remote control to the collar in her hand.

The half-naked alpha was dressed in a straitjacket, slightly dirty with blood in two places. The wounds must have opened up from the shocks and the scuffling. His skin around the collar was slightly blackened and burned, suggesting that the staff had used the collar many times. Mostly terrified nurses.

Will was stunned, sitting up in the bed when he saw Hannibal’s condition. He felt his stomach turn inside out.

The alpha was wearing a mask. He hadn't made a single aggressive move or gesture, but he was clearly flustered. When he saw Will conscious, he let out a breath as if in relief. Hannibal had not known what had happened to Will all this time, as alphas were not usually given any information. The sight of the omega calmed him noticeably.

"Hello, Will," he said hoarsely.

"What are we supposed to do with it, Mr. Graham?" asked one of the guards. They couldn't just let a serial killer roam freely, especially when the omega would have difficulty controlling him in his current state.

Will felt something inside him snap when he heard the question—that contemptuous "it" combined with the sight of Hannibal's wounds.

He snarled furiously, baring his fangs and jumping to his feet from the bed, wearing only a hospital gown.

"What gave you the right to touch him?!" he growled, exuding spicy pheromones. Hannibal was no less surprised than the guards, raising his eyebrows higher at the sight of the omega's furious reaction. He stared at Will with an intense gaze.

Will approached Hannibal and violently snatched the leash from one of the guards and the remote from the nurse.

"He is my alpha, and he brought me here to help me! I work for the FBI, and I can make your lives miserable nightmares! Now get out!" he growled out furiously. Hannibal licked his lips, watching him with shiny eyes, because he had to admit that the sight of this scene was

shockingly... delightful. He couldn't tear his eyes away from Will, and the hair on his body stood on end with pure arousal. He felt warmth and satisfaction at the sound of the words "my alpha."

The shocked guards hesitated before finally retreating from the room without a word. They would watch from outside. The pale nurse fled alongside them.
When they were alone, Will looked at Hannibal with concern and worry.

"I am sorry," he whispered quietly, carefully running his fingers over the alpha's burnt skin. Hannibal twitched slightly. The wound must have undoubtedly hurt terribly, even with Hannibal's ridiculously high pain threshold. However, he allowed the touch, watching the omega with curiosity. Will couldn't even take off his collar or muzzle here.

"You don't have anything to be sorry for," Hannibal denied. It's not like Will had planned this situation. "I'm glad you are conscious. What did they find during the examination?" Will looked him in the eye. He licked his lips and sighed.

"Brain inflammation," he replied quietly. Hannibal narrowed his eyes, but he wasn't surprised. He had expected such a diagnosis. "They said if it went on much longer, it would be too late. Thank you," the omega said. He was silent for a moment, looking so lost, his confidence from the situation a moment ago completely gone. "Why did you help me?" he asked quietly. The older man raised his eyebrows slightly, hearing this question. He led Will towards the bed so that he could lie down. He himself sat down on the chair next to him, hands hidden in the straitjacket.

"I suppose I felt that I didn't want you dead," he said quietly. Will blinked when he understood this reference.

"And your incredible brain is certainly too valuable to let it overboil," Hannibal added in a frivolous cannibal joke. Will smiled weakly, nervously, not knowing how to respond.

Hannibal looked at Will's phone lying next to him.

"You should call our dear Alana and ask her to check on the dogs and feed them. It’s been almost twelve hours."
The omega quivered. He felt a pang of guilt. He had been so focused on Hannibal that he hadn't thought about his dogs.

"Right," he mumbled and grabbed the phone. The conversation was short. Will also tapped out a text message to Jack and the university, informing him that he was sick and extending his break.

"How did you... free yourself?" Will asked, referring to the night at his house. Hannibal tilted his head slightly, raising his eyebrows in an absolutely innocent expression. After a moment, however, he sighed.

"The nail file Alana dropped turned out to be useful," he admitted after a moment. "I heard you crying and whining in pain, so I unchained myself to check on you."

Will sighed heavily. He ran his fingers over his eyelids. He couldn't even be mad about it. And he appreciated the honesty.

"Give me a moment," he muttered, getting out of bed. He left the room. Hannibal raised his eyebrows, surprised at being left alone. He waited politely, though, not that he had anything else to do with his hands tied.

A few minutes later, Will returned to the room, pushing a hospital bed on wheels in front of him.

"Lie down," he said, placing their beds next to each other. "They agreed on you staying here for now, but I have to chain you to the bed," he explained. "We'll go back home today. I can take the meds there. I don't want to stay here any longer than necessary."

Hannibal didn't protest. Besides, he knew that his very presence was terrifying to the hospital staff. As if the mere fact that he was nearby cast an evil spell.

"Alright," he said. At least he wouldn't have to stand in this position for another few hours.

He laid down on the bed. Will began to strap his ankles to the metal bed frame.

"Do they at least know what is causing your encephalitis?"
Will shook his head slightly.

"I don't know anything else, but I imagine there will be some injections," he muttered. He sighed quietly and took a juicebox with a straw from the vending machine out of his pocket. He put the straw in the carton and held it up to Hannibal's mask. The straw went through the holes at the height of his mouth. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly but then drank, undoubtedly thirsty. It was very doubtful that during all this time anyone on the staff had taken care of his basic needs.

"I had those night terrors for weeks. Sometimes hallucinations, losing time... I was sure it's because I went crazy. It's kind of a relief that it's something physical, not mental," Will said, holding the juice to Hannibal's lips. The alpha drank the whole thing. From the side, it must have looked... unique.
He looked at the omega.

"Encephalitis can be curable, but it depends on the cause and severity," he said. He tilted his head. "You almost looked like you were in your heat during the attack." Will withdrew his hands with the box when it was empty and flinched at those words. He looked at the alpha in surprise, and after a moment his cheeks reddened slightly.

"W-well... It's impossible, I have been on suppressants since my first heat," he mumbled quietly.

It must have been many years since he was already in his thirties.

Hannibal frowned at that. He narrowed his eyes.

"This is a long time of using the suppressants," he noted. "The recommended time of using them without a break for heat is approximately one year. Have you had your hormones checked?"

Could the suppressants be the reason for the omega's condition?

Will shook his head. Then he shrugged helplessly.
"I don't know," he replied quietly. He wasn't sure what tests they had run on him here.

Undoubtedly, Hannibal could tell from his scent that the effects of the suppressants had worn off, as had the blockers. The omega's pheromones were pleasantly intense.

"Do you want another? Or to use a bathroom? I'm afraid you'll have to wait to eat until we are back home. But I doubt you'd want to eat hospital food," Will muttered. He was more concerned about Hannibal than about himself, even if he was in a more serious condition. Hannibal was amused to hear and see this concern.

"Lie down, please," he ordered him. "It's alright. Focus on getting better. You need as much rest and as little stress as possible."
Will sighed and ran his hand through his hair nervously, helplessly.

"Fine," he finally muttered, although he knew he would be stressed until he got home. He returned to the bed, lying down on it, and took a deep breath. His head was spinning.
He fell asleep quickly. His body was exhausted and needed energy for regeneration.
He woke up after a few hours, hearing footsteps next to his bed when the doctor entered the room. He looked at Hannibal carefully, distrustfully, but seeing that he was chained, he turned his attention to the omega. The alpha did not move, listening attentively.

"Mr. Graham, you have been diagnosed with brain inflammation. We took your blood for tests. The procalcitonin level test showed a low level, so it is not a bacterial or virus infection, but encephalitis, autoinflammatory, which is one of the most dangerous. We had to cleanse your system of suppressants and blockers. Unfortunately, you will not be able to use them for the next three months until you fully recover." Will froze at this. He was more terrified by the last piece of information than by the inflammation of the brain itself. Hannibal shifted his gaze to him more carefully. He guessed that this was his answer to the question from a few moments ago. He narrowed his eyes.

"But then I'll go into heat," Will announced.

"Yes. And that will be healthy for your system. Blocking heat for so long disrupts the hormonal balance, which could have resulted in accelerating the development of your disease," the doctor explained. "Due to the fact that the disease may recur, it is recommended to completely discontinue suppressants."

Will looked scared.

"When can I go home?"

"Well, it would be wise to stay here for at least a week—"
"Not a chance, I want to go home today. Just tell me what to do," Will protested, rudely interrupting.

The doctor had no intention of keeping him here by force. Everyone wanted to get the Ripper out of the hospital. Distress wasn't helping Will now either.

"Daily injections and medications will be necessary. You will receive prescriptions with detailed descriptions. I will go prepare a discharge for you," he announced and left.

Will's head fell back on the pillow and closed his eyes. His pleasant scent became distressed. Hannibal didn't move, just watching him for the time being. He frowned slightly. He felt an instinctive need to comfort the distressed omega, but he couldn't even reach out to him. All he could do was release soothing pheromones.

At the same time, some part of him was excited by the information that the omega would soon have to enter heat. And not just from the purely practical side, as a way to improve his situation. For some reason, something was pulling him towards Will, although he couldn’t explain it.

"It will be alright,” he reassured. “I am a doctor, so I can provide you with constant care at home as well. At least you know what exactly the issue is. Heat lasts only a few days, and it’s known for doing wonders with an omega’s unbalanced hormones."

Will didn’t react at first. After a few seconds, however, he raised his head and looked at Hannibal in shock.

"You are an alpha," he replied emphatically. "You can't be around when I go into heat. I really have to figure out what to do with you. And look for a heat clinic or something. Fuck," he said, growing increasingly agitated despite Hannibal's calming pheromones. He knew he couldn't leave the Ripper alone in the house for a few days. He couldn't handcuff him to the bed for a few days either. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slowly. He exhaled through his nostrils and moved closer to the other bed, connected to his, as much as he could in his current state.

"Yes. I am an alpha, Will," he confirmed. "Which makes me especially helpful to you during the heat itself."

Will's eyes widened as he realized exactly what Hannibal was proposing.

"What the hell?" he gasped. "Absolutely not! Are you crazy?" he blurted out, feeling his cheeks go warm. "No, don’t answer, I know you are." He swallowed, his scent turning sour, betraying his embarrassment. He had no intention of being completely defenseless, unaware, instinct-driven, like a breeding animal, at the mercy of a cannibalistic serial killer for a few days.

"I don't need an alpha for this. There are proper toys or so," he added, looking away. Hannibal could smell his sweat, shame, and nervousness. Moving as close as he could, while

still restrained, he released pheromones that were supposed to soothe the omega's instincts, giving him the feeling that everything was under control. That the omega was in a safe space.

"There are," Hannibal confirmed. "However, you won't receive as much health benefit from the heat, and I believe the goal is to make your hormones regulated as soon as possible. You are responding to my scent well, and I suppose you have enough evidence in the case of my lack of willingness to hurt you."

Will sighed, inhaling Hannibal's pheromones by necessity. The fact that they worked on him proved that the alpha was right about the omega responding well to him.

"I appreciate your offer," he replied, trying to stay calm. "But it's impossible. It's too much risk," he added. He had been in the Ripper's mind too many times and knew what he was capable of. Even if he didn't hurt the omega, he would have a perfect opportunity to escape, and it would take a few days for Will to realize it. "Maybe I could rent a trained alpha... but I don't like it," he added. He didn't really support these practices, it was no different than using a brothel where the employees were forced to work there. "Maybe someone at my work has an alpha I could borrow for a few days."

Hannibal frowned, and Will felt a strong stab of irritation from the alpha at his words. The alpha closed his eyes. "Yes. You already have an alpha to loan to yourself, you are welcome," he stated. He didn't even know why, but he felt indignation and anger at the thought of anyone else assisting the omega during heat. "I believe we went through enough risk over the last two days, Will. I will be as engaged in the activity as you during the time, so there is no need to overthink it, considering the matters that won't be important during your heat."

"Yeah, but this could all just be your perfect plan to win my trust," Will replied wryly. "Nevermind, it will take several weeks for my hormones to stabilize. I will figure something out," he added.

The doctor interrupted them, entering the room.

"I have your discharge and prescriptions, Mr Graham. You are free to go. Please, do come back for a control visit every week," he said, handing Will the papers. The omega nodded, getting out of bed.

"Let's go," he said, starting to unfasten the chains from Hannibal's ankles. The doctor hurriedly left the room.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

> He reached out and, with a delicate, gentle gesture, turned the sleeping omega towards him. He froze for a moment, able to take a closer look at his feverish face.
>
> Will was incredibly beautiful in his fear and pain.

Chapter Notes

> Another chapter!
>
> I added few tags! And I have two messages, good and bad. The good one is that 7 chapters are done and ready to post, so I will update as often as possible.
> The bad one, last three chapters will need more time because they weren't beta edited yet and it's long and laborious work.
>
> Thank you @Redeye17 for beta ❤️

They had spent almost a whole day in the hospital, and it was late evening when they got home. This time Will was the one driving. On the way, he had stopped at the pharmacy to buy some medicines, including the ones prescribed to him. After getting home, Will, as soon as he took off his shoes and put away his keys, went over to Hannibal and took off his muzzle, and then the straitjacket that still bound his hands. Hannibal was undoubtedly very relieved, having been forced to stay in one position for almost the whole day. His hands were very numb already.

"Thank you," he murmured.

"Come, let's check your wounds."

Hannibal's brutal treatment from the security guards and nurses had reopened several of his wounds due to the repeated electric shocks. Will took care of them like the previous day, disinfected them, and put on fresh bandages. And then looked him in the eye when the alpha turned his head towards him. He sat obediently on the bed throughout the entire process, only squinting as he felt Will's fingertips on his skin.

"I want to... put an ointment on the burned skin. But I have to take off the collar," Will said quietly. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly. He looked into Will's eyes.

"Are you still afraid to do so while I'm unchained?"

Will swallowed. His scent betrayed the tension.

"Why wouldn't I? You said it yourself that you can't blame me and that ‘it's perfectly natural to feel fear. It keeps many people alive’”, he said. "And you have reasons to hurt me," he added. The Ripper might want to take revenge on him. Unless he acknowledged Will's victory and his own defeat.

Hannibal narrowed his eyes.

"It is perfectly natural to feel fear," he admitted. "Most people experience fear of something. That doesn't always mean it's right for them. There are people who are terrified of air. That doesn't mean the air is any less crucial for their survival."

He looked at Will and raised his hand to brush his cheek, slowly, just with his fingertips. The omega flinched, surprised by the touch, unaccustomed to it, and his scent intensified.

"And you are an intelligent man. Intelligent enough to already know well that it is not the collar or chains that protect you. I didn't have any of them last night, when I found you defenselessly whining in pain."

Will looked into his eyes. He knew it was true. He could have been killed many times over already. But how could he be sure that this wouldn't suddenly change?

He didn't answer; instead, he simply unfastened Hannibal's collar, not taking his eyes off him. Hannibal narrowed his eyes, watching it curiously, intrigued. In his eyes and pheromones, Will noticed something that worked wonders on his omega’s instincts.

The alpha's approval.

Will squeezed some ointment onto his fingers and carefully smeared it on his neck. The skin in many places was covered in blisters. It must have hurt like hell, but Hannibal didn't even flinch, waiting obediently for the omega to finish his job. The pain was only visible in the bulge of his muscles and his slightly uneven breathing.

"Thank you," he said, raising his gaze to meet Will's eyes.

"Can you prepare something quick to eat?" Will asked quietly. He was tired, wanting to satisfy his hunger quickly and go to sleep. The alpha nodded, getting up.

"Of course," he replied.

Will got up, put away the first aid kit, and left the room. The collar remained on the table, unused. The omega simply sat in the armchair with a glass of whiskey, one that he shouldn't be drinking but that he desperately needed, staring at the extinguished fireplace, listening to the sounds coming from the kitchen, lost in his own thoughts.

It took Hannibal only fifteen minutes to return to Will. He brought him a plate of fried salmon with crispy skin. In addition to it, there was a baguette and steamed asparagus

drizzled with butter on the plate. The dish was quick while also being highly nutritious.

Hannibal sat down next to the omega with his own plate, placing two mugs of tea on the table. Will smelled the scent of lemon balm. He smiled slightly.

"Thanks," he mumbled, and even though it was certainly still hot, immediately started eating with his fingers. He purred quietly and licked his fingers when he finished. "That was good," he added. He stood up with his plate. "We should rest," he said. Hannibal nodded, glad to provide. He looked at Will carefully.

"It seems that you are much more comfortable in your sleep with the help of my company," he said, gathering up their dirty dishes. "We could try using one bed. You need to rest properly and have decent, regenerating sleep."

Will froze at this idea. He felt a strange shiver run through his body and looked at the alpha carefully.

"I don't think I will be able to fall asleep beside the Chesapeake Ripper," he replied quietly, cautiously. He glanced at him suspiciously. Hannibal raised his eyebrows.

"You had no problem with falling asleep on the floor when I was doing dishes."

"What are you up to?" Will asked. Firstly, Hannibal proposed spending the heat together, now sleeping in the same bed. Was that some kind of trick? "If you plan to use my omegan instincts against me, I am sorry to inform you that I am broken. It won't work," he added. Hannibal tilted his head. Interesting.

"I am aware it's unbelievable for you. However, I do, in fact, have human behavior as well," he said. He narrowed his eyes, looking into the omega's eyes. "I suppose I feel some sympathy for you."

Will swallowed. The acidity in his scent betrayed his embarrassment, but he looked into the alpha's eyes and felt, to his shock, that it was not a lie.

"...very well," he finally replied. "We can try. Just tonight. But they told me I will continue to have night sweats and nightmares for a long time," he warned.

Hannibal smiled subtly.

"Perhaps my pheromones will be able to soothe you," he said. He began to prepare the bed. "If I may ask, why don't you have a nest?"

Will blinked and looked at him questioningly, as if he did not understand the question at first.

It took him a moment to comprehend, but when he did, he gasped and turned his back to Hannibal under the pretense of searching the closet for fresh nightwear.

"Told you, I am broken. I don't need a nest. Besides, I have dogs," he muttered. When he needed closeness, warmth, and comfort, he surrounded himself with his dogs. Hannibal looked at him with interest. As a psychiatrist, he was perfectly aware of how critically

important nests were for omegas, first and foremost, for their mental health. He didn't comment, though.

Will headed to the bathroom, only to return back downstairs fifteen minutes later. Hannibal had already prepared everything. He himself still didn't have any clothes here except for one pair of pants, so he was only in boxers. The alpha was smoothing out the carefully folded, freshly washed sheets. Lifting his gaze to Will, he invited him in with a gesture.

"Please, come," he said. "I shall prepare you some tea. If you sweat so much, you can easily dehydrate." Will took a breath, avoiding looking at the almost naked Hannibal. He hadn't considered the fact that he didn't have his own clothes and would be sleeping like that. Doubts had assailed him in the shower. He couldn't believe he had really agreed to this. Was it really for practical health reasons, or did the omega in him simply want it?

"Yeah, thanks," he only mumbled quietly in response, getting into one side of the bed. Fortunately, it was relatively wide. Hannibal returned with tea a few minutes later. He could definitely feel the omega's nervousness, but he didn't comment on it.

He knew that, just as when he had bought him, Will had no idea what he was doing.

He put the tea on the nightstand before, looking at the omega briefly, confidently, he slipped into bed on the other half. His body was pleasantly warm. He released comforting pheromones, feeling the omega's distress. He looked at him again, raising his eyebrows slightly.

"Did you take your medicine?"

Will didn't look at Hannibal, half-sitting tensely and staring straight ahead.

"I did. I took a pill after we ate. And they already gave me my injections at the hospital, so no more today," he replied and reached for the tea.

He tried to ignore the fact that the situation—half-naked, injured, officially owned by him, the Ripper, obligingly serving him tea—simply appealed to him. Or the omega in him. His cheeks were slightly red, and his scent betrayed nervousness but was also slightly sweet. He took a sip of tea and put the cup down. Then he turned his back on the alpha and covered himself with the blanket.

"G-g'night," he mumbled quietly. Hannibal smiled slightly, looking at him, amused but also charmed by this behavior of the startled omega.

"Good night, Will," he replied. He lay down on the other side of the bed, not in any way entering the omega's personal space, so as not to scare him away. His position was open, though he kept his arm slightly pushed out to the side, remembering how the omega had reacted to his proximity during the attack, seeking comfort. His pheromones hung in the air.

It took Will some time, more than usual, but he finally fell asleep when the alpha's pheromones slowly began to work, calming his tense body and stressed mind. Gradually, he relaxed and fell asleep.

The first half of the night passed peacefully. Hannibal also managed to fall asleep, but suddenly a quiet whimper woke him up. Will began to shiver and frown. He didn't toss and turn in the bed and didn't sweat as much as the previous night, the drugs must have started to work. He was clearly having some kind of nightmare, though. The smell of sweat mixed with the strong distressed pheromones. The alpha frowned, opening his eyes at the sound, the scent that made his hair stand on end, and his instincts stirred his blood with the need to care for the omega.

"Will," he whispered.

He reached out and, with a delicate, gentle gesture, turned the sleeping omega towards him. He froze for a moment, able to take a closer look at his feverish face.

Will was incredibly beautiful in his fear and pain.

The alpha licked his lips unconsciously. But then he slowly pulled Will closer to his torso, all the while releasing comforting pheromones. He combed his curls, intertwining his fingers in them, and gave a quiet, steady, soothing purr.

Will was whining quietly for a moment but then stopped when his body touched the other, intensely, soothingly smelling one. The omega began to breathe deeply, inhaling the pheromones. He calmed down considerably, relaxed. He was still trembling slightly, sweaty, but the nightmare seemed to have been banished. Will mumbled something quietly in his sleep, placing his hand on the alpha's torso. He tangled his fingers in the alpha’s chesthair, probably unconsciously mistaking him for one of his dogs.

But wasn't he one really?

Hannibal would consider such a description rude, but it didn't change the fact that it certainly matched the current reality to a large extent.

He also had to admit that the omega's reactions to his proximity were... incredibly fascinating, especially coming from someone who was supposedly broken.

The alpha combed the omega's curls with slow, gentle movements for a long moment, waiting not only for Will to calm down but also to fall deeply asleep again. Only then did he follow him.

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When Will woke up, his cheek was nestled against a larger, warm body, and his hand was tangled in some nice fur. He could feel the soothing, relaxing scent that surrounded him from every side, flowing straight into his nostrils. He was cozy and comfortable, despite feeling something tangled in his hair.

It was already noon. Hannibal had been awake for hours already, but he hadn't moved in all that time to not wake the omega, who clearly needed rest. So he had simply been watching him, observing every detail of his face.

Will, undoubtedly, had an angelic face, despite the scruffy stubble. It would seem that he had it to hide something under it—maybe his beauty. Facial hair was not something that omegas usually wore, but Hannibal knew that this particular one preferred to be invisible.

His hair was sticking to his forehead, his skin was shiny with sweat, and his scent was pleasant and tempting now that he was calm. He had slept for a long time, catching up on what he had missed.

When Will started to wake up, he purred quietly. Feeling the warm fur, he instinctively ran his fingers through it.

"Hhn... Buster?" he whispered sleepily, not opening his eyelids. "Are you hungry?"

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly hearing those words. He smiled indulgently with amusement. He ran his fingers through the omega's curls, massaging his scalp with his fingertips towards his temples. He suddenly heard the omega's purr, causing his entire chest to vibrate.

"I am, but I suppose that taking a bite would be rude. I, unfortunately, can't say much about Buster," he replied. He tilted his head slightly. He didn't take his eyes off the omega. "Good morning, Will."

Will stiffened suddenly, and his eyelids flew open. The reaction was lightning fast. With something between a squeal and a scream, Will jerked back so hard that he not only fell off the bed but also hit his head on the nightstand. He hissed with pain, grabbing the bruised spot. He looked at Hannibal in panic, and his scent immediately turned bitter and distressed. His heart was pounding like crazy. Waking up next to the Ripper must have been terrifying. "What the hell...?!"

Hannibal looked at him, raising his eyebrows a little higher. He bristled slightly in reaction to the omega's distress, but his gaze was indulgent.

"I'm afraid your brain boiled for a little too long, Will." He stood up to help the omega to his feet, then slid his hand onto his head. "Let me see, please."

Will allowed it without hesitation, looking at the alpha confused and lost. He stood up on slightly trembling legs. Hannibal sniffed around, searching protectively to see if the omega had been damaged by his fall. There was no smell of blood, though. Will immediately jumped back as if shocked.

"I knew this was a bad idea," he huffed, flustered. "I... sorry, I... thought you were one of my dogs." Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, amused.

"You have nothing to apologize for. Perhaps to your own head," he said, looking significantly at the place where the raised lump would surely appear. "And I must say you slept quite well,

so I wouldn’t jump to such conclusions too quickly. You had one short nightmare during the night, and then you slept peacefully."

Will looked at him dissatisfied, because he knew it was true. And he didn’t like it. He felt more rested than he had in a long time, and his head didn’t hurt.

The dogs started to circle by the door, and Winston barked and scratched at it expectantly. Hannibal glanced at them significantly and then returned his gaze to Will.

"You should take them outside. I will make you a coffee and take care of breakfast.

Hearing this, Will simply nodded and walked away because he wanted to escape this awkward situation. He swallowed, feeling that he was all flushed with embarrassment. He went outside to get some fresh air. He had to remind himself every now and then that he was the Ripper. The bloody Chesapeake Ripper.

The very same Ripper brought him steaming, insanely fragrant, and more intense coffee a few minutes later. They had bought a much better Brazilian blend from the store with their last purchases.

"Your coffee," he said, handing him the cup. Will glanced at it and took it with a nod.

"Thank you," he replied. It crossed his mind that Hannibal could just easily have poisoned it, although he knew that wasn't his modus operandi.

"The breakfast will be ready in fifteen minutes. I will also prepare food for the dogs." Will nodded gratefully.

"Okay, thank you," he repeated.

Hannibal tilted his head slightly, watching the omega. He flared his nostrils.

"It's difficult to avoid noticing that you are feverish again, Will. Is your temperature high?" Will shook his head.

"No, I don't think so. I think it’s my body reacting to the sudden lack of suppressants and closeness of an alpha," he replied and drank his coffee, watching the dogs running while leaning against the door frame.

He licked his lips.

"I think your presence may induce my heat sooner. You shouldn't be here," he muttered.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly. "Quite the opposite, I would say. The heat is now a treatment for you, so inducing it sooner may only be helpful to your health," he noted. "And your body and mind need an alpha now, considering how you are reacting to my proximity. You are receiving what you need, even if it isn't what you consciously want. I can understand that. I am not a fan of losing control either."

Will narrowed his eyes. "How is it a treatment for me? Omegas in heat literally boil with high temperatures. I thought I should avoid more fire in my brain," he replied. "And if you don't like losing control, then why are you pushing this whole idea?"

"Perhaps my previously mentioned sympathy to you won't permit me to let anyone else take care of you," he replied. Will froze upon hearing this. He looked at the alpha, his lips slightly parted. "Sometimes letting a fire burn out in controlled conditions is the best way to limit damage, and the ash makes an excellent fertilizer for new soil. The heat will reset your hormones correctly and should prevent you from overheating anymore," Hannibal continued. Will exhaled quietly and scratched his cheek.

"I've never been with an alpha. Ever," he mumbled quietly, bashfully. The alpha tilted his head slightly. He didn't even realize that what he felt was deep gratification. The alpha inside him was content, and a short, meaningful "good" echoed in his head.

"Would you like to try it consciously before your heat?" Hannibal asked calmly, not taking his eyes off him. "To become comfortable with it and feel safe." Will tensed nervously at this idea. He blushed even more, and his heart began to beat faster. His scent soured, but there were subtle hints of sweetness to it as well.

"...I will think about it if I don't find a better solution," he finally muttered, tightly squeezing the coffee mug. Hannibal's lips twitched subtly, because it was by no means a ‘no’.

Will took a sip of coffee. Suddenly, his phone rang. Will answered it, only to hear Jack's angry roar.

"What were you thinking, Will?! There is a whole article about ‘cannibalistic serial killer scares hospital staff’!"

Will sighed heavily. He knew it would happen sooner or later.

"Jack, I’m on sick leave. You can't call me," he muttered tiredly. Hannibal narrowed his eyes, distinctly displeased with the fact that the man on the phone had raised his voice at Will.

"About that, there is a murder and I need you to see it. It looks like one of the Ripper’s, but we know it’s not his since he’s with you," said Jack. "Can you come? Just quickly take a look. It's near your home."

Will closed his eyes.

"If you promise not to yell again, fine. Send me the address," he muttered and hung up. Hannibal watched him uninterruptedly.

"That was rude," he noted as Will put the phone in his pocket. He tilted his head. "Should we eat him?"

Instead of being outraged, scared, or disgusted, Will burst out laughing.

"I would never touch him. He won’t be tasty. Too bitter all the time," he muttered, causing a slight, amused smile from the cannibal. Will's phone vibrated, revealing that Jack had sent

him the address. Will sighed.

"Come upstairs, please. I have to go out for a while," he said quietly, heading towards the stairs. It was obvious that he intended to handcuff Hannibal to the bed again. "And no, you can’t go with me." Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, looking like a kicked puppy.

"I could be helpful," he noted. After all, he was literally an example of how a murderer's mind works, and a psychiatrist in addition. "And the breakfast is ready, it's in the oven. You should eat first." Will paused.

"Okay, we can eat," he agreed. "And yes, I know you could be helpful, truly. But I can't bring you to a crime scene. They would kill me. Besides, you are not authorized," he added. "Please, don't make it difficult. I don't like this situation either," he muttered, sitting down at the table. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly at that. Hot shakshuka with freshly baked bread and bowls of sweet couscous with Manuka honey, dates, and chopped nuts were placed on the table. Will's mouth watered at the sight of it all.

He still hadn't gotten used to Hannibal's meals.

"I actually don't have to, or even can be, authorized," he noted, sitting down at the table. It wasn't like he could get those qualifications. Legally, he was practically dead. As an alpha, he had no legal personhood, and what he could do or not depended only on the permission of his owner. "It's permission enough that you are allowed on the crime scene." Will thought about it. He knew it was true. He was more like an object than anything else.

The dogs were eating their breakfasts, smacking loudly, and licking their bowls. Hannibal looked at Will and raised his eyebrows.

"I am not being difficult. I am actually nothing but cooperative."

"I know," Will replied quietly. He sighed. "I would take you if not for the fact that my whole team hates me enough already. I really don't want that kind of attention," he muttered. Hannibal looked at him indulgently, serving him a portion of shakshuka.

"I believe it's unavoidable," he said. "Our dear Alana certainly told everyone about the shop incident. However, being with you, I may stare back at everyone who will be so rude as to give you unwanted attention."

Will smiled in amusement, imagining it.

"She most likely did," he replied. "But bringing you would be like a provocation. So, please, stay," he added. "And when I'm back, we'll drive to your home and bring some of your stuff," he encouraged. He felt like he was leaving one of his dogs with separation anxiety at home. Hannibal was clearly unhappy. He didn't like the prospect of being chained to the bed for the next few hours.

Well, he could always just open the shackles again.

"My entire existence is a provocation, Will. I believe it wouldn't make such a difference if I am present or not," he said, grabbing his own cutlery to start eating. Will frowned slightly.

"It would make a difference to me," he said firmly. "So no, you are not coming," he added. And then he began to eat. The alpha narrowed his eyes. Will could feel his dissatisfaction, which raised the hairs on the omega's skin. Hannibal, however, did not comment, shoving a bite of food into his mouth. The breakfast was incredibly tasty and filling.

Hannibal stopped Will before he got ready to leave.

"Your medications, Will," he reminded.

"Ah, right." Will moved to find the pharmacy bag. Yesterday he went to the pharmacy, where he had bought injections, needles, and ampoules. He began turning them over in his hands, reading instructions on the packaging, unsure how the injection should be administered. Anywhere or intravenously? What dose?

Hannibal looked at Will, who was standing there in confusion. He raised his eyebrows slightly.

"Would you like me to help?" he asked politely.

Will glanced at him and, after a moment, nodded slightly and pushed the injections and medicines towards him. Hannibal gave him an indulgent smile and reached for the medicines.

"Show me the documents you received at the hospital," he ordered Will, and Will obliged. The alpha glanced at them to check the test results before leading Will to the couch.

"Sit, please," he said. He prepared the injections himself, carefully measuring the doses. He inserted and vented the needle, then extended his hand. "Give me your arm, please." Will offered his arm but watched Hannibal carefully, remaining still as the alpha disinfected his forearm and the needle was inserted into his body.

"Thanks," he replied. He rubbed his hand and put the first aid kit away. "Now please, come upstairs."

Hannibal raised his eyebrows incredulously, looking Will in the eye. They both knew that chaining him was highly unnecessary. The Chesapeake Ripper was only staying where he wanted to be anyway.

He didn't comment, though, heading upstairs. Will put a few books on the nightstand so that Hannibal would have something to do during omega's absence.

"Sorry, but the fact that you act so trustworthy makes me even more suspicious," Will muttered. He fastened Hannibal's legs to the bed. Instead of the same padlock as last time, he used a padlock with a password combination. He fastened it to the chain and lifted the corner of his mouth cunningly.

"Behave," he muttered with a smile and headed for the door. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, dissatisfied. His gaze became colder.

"It almost looks like you wish me to stop acting trustworthily, Will," he noted. Will really didn't appreciate his cooperation.

Will looked at him doubtfully.

"I think I have already given you much more trust than you should have received," he replied. It was the Ripper after all.

"Don't sulk. Make a list of things you want to bring from your home," he added and left.

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Hannibal was extremely displeased, especially since Will only returned late in the evening after many hours. He waited politely, because unfortunately he hadn't figured out the code to the padlock yet. He needed to find out more about Will to narrow down the potential number of combinations.

When he returned, he could smell spicy pheromones hanging in the air. The alpha was irritated. And somewhat worried about Will's prolonged absence, but he laid in bed as he had been told. Not that he had much of a choice.

"Hello, Will. I'd started to become worried," he said, lifting his gaze to the omega as he slipped into the room.

Will was relieved to see Hannibal remained where he had left him. He had subconsciously expected the worst.

"That's nice, but no need to. I'm fine," he said, stepping inside. The smell of sweat and fever followed him. Will looked very tired. "I'm glad you were good," he added, starting to undo the alpha's ankles. Hannibal raised a skeptical eyebrow. His gaze and pheromones suggested that he was anything but 'good'. He was dying of boredom, having spent practically the entire day in bed with no way to move. "Aren't you against the abuse of keeping animals chained, Will?" Will was amused that Hannibal considered himself an animal.

"Depends. Are beasts animals?" he replied. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly.

"We are all animals, Will. The only thing that changes is your perception." He allowed himself to be unchained, sitting up. He sniffed, tasting the sweetness of inflammation. He tilted his head slightly and reached out to place a hand on the omega's forehead.

"You are overheating again." Will shrugged.

"It's my normal state," he replied. "I will take dogs out and have a short nap. Then we can go to your home," he said. He tried to act like everything was fine, but it was obvious he was exhausted. Hannibal put his hands on his shoulders and sat him down on the bed.

"No, we cannot," he denied. "And you won't do anything tonight. You will lie down and rest. I shall take the dogs out and prepare dinner."

After all, they had only eaten breakfast today.

Will looked at him in surprise.

"Thank you... but I promised you we would go to your home. You need clothes, a toothbrush, and other things, I guess," he muttered.

Besides, Hannibal had set him down on his bed. Will had no intention of sleeping here, surrounded by the alpha's pheromones.

"Make something quick and we can go." Hannibal leaned over to wrap the blanket around him. He had been lying in this bed all day, so the pheromones were intense.

"I insist," he said. "We will go tomorrow. Don't force me to return your favor and chain you to the bed, please."

Will gasped and raised his eyebrows at the ‘threat’. He felt treated and scolded like a child. Hannibal handed Will a book and left for a moment, only to return with a cold compress for his forehead. He set it in place on Will and placed a cup of tea next to him.

He also gave him an aspirin.

"Rest, please," he said before heading downstairs to walk the dogs and prepare dinner. Will simply stared after him in surprise, not even having time to realize what just happened. He glanced at the book in his hands, which Hannibal had thrust at him like a toy to a child, to distract him. He put it down with a sigh. He had already read it twice.

He flared his nostrils and finally decided that it wouldn't hurt to rest for a moment. Just while waiting for food. He lay down and closed his eyes.

When he woke up, he smelled the delicious smell of food. Hannibal stood next to him with a plate filled with delicacies. Pumpkin soup with croutons, pumpkin seeds and parmesan chips, creamy spaghetti with salmon and broccoli, and avocado salad, all adapted to the diet conducive to recovery from encephalitis.

His stomach clenched with hunger, and his nostrils flared. He sat up, sleepy, half-aware. He had fallen asleep surprisingly quickly. He didn't want to think about whether it was the alpha's pheromones or not that helped him.

He looked at the food and purred. It really did look delicious, or maybe he was the one who was particularly hungry.

The alpha sat down next to him. He had a spoon in his hand to help the omega eat. The soup was thick and aromatic.

"How do you feel, Will?"

"Sleepy and hungry, but fine," he mumbled. He raised a skeptical eyebrow. "You're not feeding me," he said. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly in innocent surprise.

"Why not? You're tired, Will."

Will didn’t comment, glancing at him, not amused. Hannibal stirred the soup with the spoon before passing the bowl to the omega.

Will ate the soup quickly, then started on the spaghetti.

"Apparently you have an admirer. Or a copycat," he said at one point. "This new crime scene was made in honor of your ‘work’."

Hannibal tilted his head slightly, curiously, intrigued. He didn't blink.

"I see," he said. "I believe that my presence would only be more valuable in that case," he added with a subtle, sarcastic note of reproach, fixing the omega's fresh compress. "I would like to meet my admirer."

Will raised his eyebrows.

"You will meet him when I catch him," he replied with a mouth full of pasta, lifting the corner of his mouth. "I have photos of his tableau. I would say they are as beautiful as yours," he added. Hannibal froze. He stiffened, straightening up, and narrowed his eyes, his gaze becoming sharper, like a predator's, and colder at the same time. He was downright indignant, and the air was filled with more spicy pheromones.

"I see," he said again, but his voice took on a more menacing note. "Show me the pictures then, please. I am extremely curious." Will raised his eyebrows, slightly surprised by the contrasting emotions he sensed from Hannibal. He didn't understand them.

"In the bag by the front door," he said. Hannibal raised his eyebrows, then headed downstairs, returning a moment later with the photos.

They depicted a murder tableau made with great attention to detail. The dead man was an alpha in a collar, and his body was kneeling by the lake, a smile painted on the corpse's lips. Flowers and segmented links of shackles and chains were lying around, as if they had been broken.

"He lacks your surgical precision but has the same imagination and love for symbolism," Will said after a few seconds, watching Hannibal. The alpha narrowed his eyes, staring at the photos. He tilted his head slightly, intrigued.

The scene didn't look like a challenge to him. It looked more like the author wished him freedom, showing him his act of admiration. His ego was stroked.

"What do you think about the killer?"

Will didn't have to think long before answering.

"He adores you, and he showed it by making his work look like it was inspired by your style. He wishes for your freedom and death to everyone who took it from you. In his stomach we found a heart. An omega's heart. We haven't found the rest of the body yet. This tableau is like a memorial for the Chesapeake Ripper," he said calmly. Hannibal tilted his head. His lips twitched subtly.

"It's a courtship," he concluded. He was clearly pleased with the fact that he was receiving well-deserved attention and appreciation, which were like catnip to him. He looked up at Will, meeting his eyes. "Performed by an omega."

Will returned his gaze.

"I am not sure about that," he replied calmly. "But I am sure he will kill again soon. Maybe even tonight," he added and ate another forkful of pasta. Hannibal tilted his head. He felt a hint of irrational dissatisfaction, seeing Will approach this so calmly. With no jealousy.

"Not if he receives the attention of the person he wants to attract."

Will continued chewing.

"I will not allow you to kill and make your own tableau as an answer to him," he replied calmly but firmly. "Unless you mean killing me. Then I suppose I don't have much to say about that," he added, not looking particularly threatened, focused on the pasta. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, politely.

"Who said anything about preparing a tableau for him?" He didn't say he was interested in taking up courtship. He only volunteered to help stop the aforementioned from killing any more. Will understood it the other way around.

"Only another tableau would be a worthy answer for him," he replied calmly.

"I didn't say he was worthy of my answer," Hannibal noted calmly. That was enough to just spark his interest, at most.

Will looked up at the alpha, surprised.

"Then what did you mean?" Hannibal narrowed his eyes.

"He is aware of my situation. That means he has seen me under your supervision," he said. "Leading to the conclusion that he is nearby. I could attract his attention, walking freely on the street."

Will narrowed his eyes.

"Not gonna happen," he replied. "Don’t worry. If I caught you, then I will catch him," he muttered teasingly, raising the corner of his mouth and narrowing his eyes.

He finished his pasta and handed the plate to Hannibal. Then he got up from his bed and headed for the door. Hannibal was aware that these words were veiled compliments to him,

but he still felt irritated. He offered help, and Will ungratefully rejected it. He narrowed his eyes.

"Isn't it rude to reject help that may save lives, Will?" Will stopped in the doorway.

"Save lives by destroying others? No," he replied. "Go to the bathroom and let me know when you're done," he said. He most likely intended to chain Hannibal to his own bed for the night. The alpha felt annoyed at this idea, and he withdrew his head slightly. Especially right after having just spent about ten hours in that bed.

"There is no need. You may go to sleep already," he announced calmly but firmly, looking Will in the eye. Will sensed the challenge being thrown at him and returned the look.

"There is a need. I have to chain you for the night," he said calmly.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows doubtfully. He was disappointed to see that Will really didn't appreciate his good intentions. Why then should he show them? He felt downright offended by the suggestion that he would be handcuffed again and spend basically twenty-four hours in this bed.

"No, thank you," he said politely, but his look and the spicy notes in his scent suggested that the alpha was displeased. Will frowned, his face puffing up instinctively in response to those spicy pheromones.

"I would consider that rude. However, since you are not feeling comfortable in my presence, I believe you don't want it in the bed either," he added, looking the omega in the eye before heading to the bathroom. Will raised his eyebrows, watching him go. As though their sharing of the bed was something normal.

He waited until Hannibal left the bathroom.

"Lie in the bed, please," he said calmly, standing next to him with a padlock in his hand. Hannibal lifted his eyebrows slightly, politely, a towel draped over his shoulder. His hair was still slightly damp.

"Will, did you actually consider your plan when I did not cooperate?" he asked. He was currently wearing nothing, not even a collar. The omega could shoot him at most.

"I deeply hope you will cooperate and won't break our thread of understanding," Will replied. "After all, I've done nothing to offend you, nor have I abused my position of power over you. I think I deserve the bare minimum of respect from you to at least listen to my request."

Hannibal took a step toward the omega.

"After I spent the whole day chained to the bed because of your lack of trust, right after I saved your life the day before, I think I deserve a little more respect as well." Will felt amusement.

"I am grateful you helped me. I wouldn't call it saving, but you've taken many more lives than saved so I have the right to my reservations," he said. "Lie down, please," he repeated.

Hannibal narrowed his eyes. He was clearly irritated and disappointed by Will's behavior.

He clearly thought that Will was a more intelligent man than that.

"The lives I took weren't worthy of being left alive," he announced calmly. As if talking about the dirt he had cleaned up from a dusty cabinet. He tilted his head slightly. "God took billions of lives, yet still most of our society trusts him with their own."

Will narrowed his eyes.

"Not me. I don't trust God. I don't trust anyone without solid evidence and a lot of time," he replied. "Will you lie down or not? I think it's rude to reject the request of your host."

"Perhaps. However, leaving the guests chained is even more rude," he noted. His pheromones were warning, raising the hairs on his skin.

Will had to be aware that the many ways in which the alpha could quickly take his life must have gone through his mind during this conversation. The cannibal's gaze was that of a predator wondering whether to pounce on its prey. Will saw it clearly, felt its emotions, but did nothing, staring into the beast's eyes. He simply waited and watched.

Hannibal took another step towards the omega. Will did not back down, did not lower his head, did not even tense up, even though his instincts told him to do so. He looked... resigned. As if he had reconciled with the fact that Hannibal might kill him any moment. They just stared at each other like that. The alpha’s gaze sharp, the omega’s one calm. They could feel their own breaths on their faces. Hannibal looked into the younger man’s eyes closely before finally lying down on the bed. Will sighed quietly.

"Thank you," he replied quietly and fastened the handcuffs and the padlock, setting the code. "Good night."

Hannibal raised his eyebrows doubtfully at the wish, which sounded like mockery under the current circumstances.

"Sleep well, Will," he replied, because it would be against his nature to skip courtesy. He didn't move as he lay in bed, but he watched the omega with a sharp, intense gaze as he left the room, closing the door behind him.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

He felt a surge of adrenaline, blood rushing in his ears. He didn't even wonder what was happening. Only one thing mattered.

Will was in danger. And someone dared to touch him.

Chapter Notes

Big thanks to my beta @Redeye17 <3
All mistakes are my fault!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first two hours of the night passed peacefully. Hannibal even managed to fall asleep. However, this time he was once again woken up by the quiet omegan whimpers and whining. Unfortunately, there was little he could do this time. In some way he even wanted to punish Will for his behavior and ingratitude, by ignoring it, but he realized he suffers himeslf because of it. He felt riled up, unable to sleep because his instincts were on high alert.

Sometime after three, Hannibal heard a clatter from downstairs and then footsteps that definitely did not belong to dogs nor Will. Right after that, there was a loud bang, a crack, the sound of breaking glass, and Will's groan of pain. The alpha heard the sound of struggling and two distinct voices, Will's and someone unknown. He twitched, jerking his head up nervously.

He felt a surge of adrenaline, blood rushing in his ears. He didn't even wonder what was happening. Only one thing mattered.

Will was in danger. And someone dared to touch him.

He yanked on the chains twice, and there was a groan of bending wood. The third time he gritted his teeth, tensed his muscles, and jerked the chains again. He felt the cuffs cutting his skin, but he ignored it as the wooden bed frame finally succumbed under the brute force. With a growl, he ripped the chains wildly, tearing a piece of wood from the bed, and rushed downstairs.

He smelled Will's blood, and upon entering the living room, he saw him lying on the ground in a pool of scarlet blood. The omega was curled up in a ball, clutching his stomach.

Hannibal felt his own blood boiling in his veins, roaring in his ears. He narrowed his eyes at the sight. He felt anger. And worry.

A hooded figure stood over Will, a knife in their hand. They flinched, seeing Hannibal.

"Doctor Lecter," the stranger said, voice pleasant to the ear, youthful. "I'm so happy to finally meet you. I've been looking for you since your arena fight. I am Remy," they introduced themselves, pulling the hood from their head. Remy turned out to be a charming-looking young man with dark blond hair falling over his forehead. He was a little over twenty years old. "I've prepared a boat and fake papers for you."

Will lay on the ground and panted heavily, his distressed scent mixed with the scent of blood. He opened his eyelids and looked up at Hannibal half-consciously. Their eyes met for a moment, then he closed them again in resignation. Hannibal narrowed his own. He took a step towards the newcomer, only now raising his gaze to him.

"Hello, Remy," he said, coming closer. "You must be the artist of the display near the lake? Excellent work for your first time, I must admit."

Remy's eyes widened, and his cheeks reddened. His scent became sour-sweet. Excitement mixed with shyness. Hannibal flared his nostrils, assuring himself that he was right. He was dealing with an omega.

"Have you seen it? I am so glad you liked it," Remy replied. He smiled. "I prepared everything for your escape," he added.

"I appreciate it. I can see you became deeply inspired by my art. I am grateful for the gift you prepared for me," he said. Omega blushed, his smile widening.

"Y-you are welcome, Doctor Lecter," he replied quietly. He looked as if he had met his idol. He slowly walked closer and handed Hannibal the knife. The alpha took it and tilted his head slightly. "I didn't kill him so you could do it personally," the boy added.

Will's eyelids opened weakly, hearing that. He was sweating and shaking with exertion. His hair was sticking to his forehead. His gaze was clouded with a semi-conscious haze, but he was aware of what was happening around him. Even if he wasn't killed now, he would soon bleed out.

Hannibal narrowed his eyes, looking at him, standing with a knife in his hand.

"It's a beautiful gift, Remy. It's a shame I wasn't given the opportunity to see your capabilities earlier, under different circumstances. I can clearly see you are a young artist filled with vision," he said. Remy straightened up proudly, happy with the praise.

"I've admired your art for years. I was so glad when you became active again," he replied.

Hannibal looked up at him. His eyes were cold.

"The only issue is that you hurt Will. And this is something I, unfortunately, cannot forgive." Having said that, he stuck the blade straight into Remy's heart, all the way to the knife's

handle. The omega didn't expect that. He opened his eyes wide, and a strangled moan escaped his lips. His gaze was full of a sense of betrayal and incomprehension.

Will also opened his eyes slightly despite his weakness and loss of blood. He parted his mouth in surprise.

And then Remy's dead body fell to the ground next to Will, who looked at it in shock. A blood stain began to grow under the corpse, gradually spreading across the wooden floor. Hannibal gave the dead omega a quick, indifferent look, and then he leaned over Will to pick him up, still holding the bloody knife in his hand. He took Will in his arms like a child, the omega’s blood dripping down his torso.

"Stay with me, Will," he ordered him directly into his ear.

Will groaned heavily in pain. But then he put his arm around Hannibal's neck and buried his face in the crook of his neck. He clung to him tightly and trustingly, squeezing his eyes shut. He let out a quiet omegan whining, and the alpha felt a few tears on his neck. Hannibal let out a low, soothing growl right into his ear and nuzzled his neck.

"It's alright," he whispered. "I am here."

He pushed everything off the table to lay him on it before ripping off the t-shirt he had been sleeping in. He inspected the stab wound between Will’s ribs and then he created a makeshift tourniquet from the material.

"Look at me. Can you describe to me what you see?" he asked, wanting to distract the omega. Will looked at him with a misty gaze. He weakly raised his hand and ran his trembling hand over the alpha's cheek, staining it with blood.

"My alpha," he whispered quietly, and then his hand fell, smearing blood across the older man’s face and leaving a bloody streak. Hannibal froze, staring at him. His heart pounded with shock. He had expected many words, descriptions, maybe blabbering, but certainly not this. He felt warmth, and his lips twitched subtly. He bowed his head and buried his nose in Will's hair for a moment. He brushed his lips against his forehead.

"Yes," he whispered, although Will was already unconscious. "So leave it to me."

He disappeared for only a moment before he returned with a first aid kit, a bowl of water, and a towel. He began stitching Will's wound. Maybe it was a good thing that Will had drifted off. At least he wasn't suffering. Fortunately, the wound hadn't damaged any organs or major veins. Will also had a small cut from the blow on his temple. However, the wounds, apart from the risk of bleeding out, were fortunately not serious.

It was only when Hannibal finished with Will that he noticed that the dogs were asleep, not even paying attention to the whole situation. They hadn't rushed to help their master, most likely they had been put to sleep. That meant Remy had to have been watching them for a long time, doing some reconnaissance, and getting ready. Hannibal made sure the dogs were okay and just sleeping, then carefully lifted Will off the table and headed for the stairs.

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When Will woke up, he was lying in a soft bed filled with the scent of an alpha. It was definitely not a hospital bed.

After a moment, he realized he was in his home, in a bed in a room upstairs. It was the middle of the day, so at least a few hours had passed. He had a compress on his forehead. He was alone in the room, but there was fresh tea on the bedside table next to him. There were also injections prepared, which suggested that Hannibal had only had to leave for a moment.

Will immediately remembered what had happened and what the pain in his side and head reminded him of. He didn't try to get up. He glanced at the bedside table and narrowed his eyes, calm, not afraid that the Ripper may escape or do something worse. Not after what had happened. He took a quiet breath and closed his eyes. He inhaled deeply the heavy, predatory, but strangely calming scent of an alpha.

After a moment, Hannibal slipped into the room. He looked perfect, completely different from someone who had committed a messy murder a few hours ago. He was wearing a clean, stylish shirt, probably taken from the things Remy had prepared for him on the boat, which suggested that he had to go out to get them. His hair was styled and he was completely calm.

Will stared at him in surprise, taking in the sight.

Seeing that Will had woken up, Hannibal stopped for a moment. He looked at him more carefully before smiling subtly.

"Good afternoon," he said. He entered, carrying a prepared bowl of warm water and a cotton towel. He sat down next to the omega. "It's a pleasure to see you conscious. Does your head still hurt?" he began as if nothing had happened. As if the situation they had been through was the most normal thing under the sun. Will looked at him carefully.

"Could be worse," he replied quietly, hoarsely.

Could be much worse if not for Hannibal’s sudden help.
Hannibal slid the omega's compress down to place his hand on his forehead, checking his temperature carefully. Will was as hot as usual, sweaty, his hair plastered to his forehead, and his eyes were blurry. He smiled slightly.

"Thank you," he whispered hoarsely. Hannibal tilted his head slightly, only to smile after a moment. He nodded.

"You're welcome," he said. He placed a fresh compress on Will's forehead and moved the blanket to take care of his wound. He unwrapped the carefully tied bandage and revealed it. It was sewn together with great precision and attention to detail. Will looked at it carefully, recognizing Hannibal's work immediately. He had seen it many times in his murder tableaus.

Wonderful, not only encephalitis, but also this. All that was missing was for him to fall into heat now to complete his hopeless situation.
Hannibal dampened the towel with warm water before carefully cleaning the wound.

"Are you hungry?"

Will gasped quietly and shook his head slightly."No... Not hungry. But I have a headache," he whispered. He narrowed his eyes. "...you could have been free."

Hannibal looked up at him. He raised his eyebrows slightly.

"I thought I was your guest," he said suggestively, referring to their conversation. Will smiled crookedly, weakly.

"Forced to be a guest," he corrected. After washing and disinfecting his wounds, Hannibal put a fresh dressing on him.

"Give me your arm, please," he ordered.

Will didn't hesitate, sliding his hand palm up. Hannibal gave him two previously prepared injections, then another one, a painkiller.

"It's for your pain," he explained. He looked up at the omega, gazing directly into his eyes. "Will. Do you truly believe I would have stayed here after the very first day if I hadn't decided to do so?"

Will looked at him tiredly, feverishly.

"...so why did you decide to stay?" He asked in a hoarse whisper. The alpha looked at him. He smiled slightly, warmly.

"Because I saw the most beautiful and unique piece of art I've ever seen. And I am attracted to fine art."
Will froze. He opened his eyes wider, feeling his heart beat faster. He parted his lips slightly but said nothing.

Hannibal finished taking care of Will and slid his hand to the back of his head to support it as he helped him drink. Will drank greedily, not taking his eyes off the alpha.
He put his head back on the pillow.

"...I hope you won't make any of your art out of me," he said quietly. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly. He smiled slightly, amused.

"That would be truly beautiful art," he admitted, and Will felt both nervous and pleased at the same time. "However, I believe that kind of art is more valuable alive. I, unfortunately, can't create art from Remy either, as it would draw unwanted attention. Making a masterpiece in the kitchen has to be enough this time." Hearing this, Will closed his eyes. He exhaled heavily, but he knew he shouldn't complain after everything Hannibal had done.

"...I should report it. And they will know if anything is missing," he said quietly. He couldn't say he had let his slave eat a murderer wanted by the FBI. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly.

"Not if he is burned to ashes," he noted. This was a rare opportunity to prepare something of his specialties for Will. It would be a shame not to take advantage of it. Will looked into his eyes, hesitating.

If he agreed and concealed this crime, he would become an accomplice in the Ripper's crime. On the other hand, he feels like he owes him. A lot.

He swallowed.

"...fine. Dispose of the body. And cook something if you want," he finally agreed. "But I don't want to eat it," he stipulated. Hannibal frowned slightly. He looked sad and worried.

"That won't have any value if we don't share the meal. Such occasions should be celebrated, don't you think, Will?" Will frowned back at him.

"What occasion? Getting me almost killed? Being attacked by your psychofan?" he snorted mockingly. "I am not a cannibal, Hannibal," he added. He froze suddenly, opening his eyes as realization washed over him. "Oh my fuckin' God, it rhymes... I don't believe it. Is it your real name, or did you change it as some sort of stupid joke?"

Hannibal blinked, surprised. He glanced at Will, then smiled indulgently.

"You indeed have quite a high fever, Will," he commented. He set the empty mug on the nightstand. "Yes, it is my real name. I received it after my father. He was, and so am I, a descendant of the warlord Hannibal the Grim."
Will looked at Hannibal carefully. As carefully as someone injured and feverish could.

"Huh...? You are from some sort of... aristocratic lineage or something?" he asked quietly.
Hannibal slowly raised his eyebrows.

"Did you read the letter that came to you after the auction, Will?"
Will blinked.

"What letter?" he asked, confused. A letter with the specifications of the purchased product?
"And what auction? There wasn't any auction. No one else wanted you," he informed brutally. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, irrationally feeling a hint of resentment and indignation. Well, what could be expected from the herd that occupied every row of that audience?

"The letter, in which the government informed you that you received all my official belongings," Hannibal recalled. "There was also information about my title and my family castle."
Will's eyes widened.

"...what castle?" he gasped.

Does it mean that he also owns a castle now?!

He had read the letter, but there was only mention of the estate in Baltimore and the bank accounts. Nothing about the castle or title.

"I was born in Lithuania, in the castle owned by my father, Count Hannibal Lecter VII," Hannibal explained. "I received the same title as Count Lecter VIII. My mother, Madame Simonette Sforza, was related to the Sforza and Visconti families, an Italian well-known ruling aristocracy. Perhaps you've visited the castle in Milano that was part of their belongings."

Will stared at him as if seeing him for the first time.

"...no, I haven't," he replied after a moment.

Fuckin aristocrat. Old money. No wonder he's so cocky and narcissistic.

"Then I suppose living in my house must be a nightmare to you," he added wryly. His life was the complete opposite of anything aristocratic. All the more reason he didn't know why Hannibal hadn't taken the opportunity to escape. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly in indulgent amusement.

"Occasionally I have truly decent company. When you don't allow your lack of trust to make you short in manners. Especially since your rude actions trying to take my freedom were incredibly pointless, I must admit." Will rolled his eyes but didn't comment. He had warned him from the very beginning that he was a rude person.

"So that's where your accent comes from," he muttered quietly. He sighed. "Back to that psycho fan of yours. I am not eating him, so just, please, take what you want for yourself and then get rid of the body," he muttered, returning to the previous topic once he had somewhat digested the shock of what he had learned about Hannibal. Hannibal raised his eyebrows higher.

"That would be terribly wasteful. Especially, as I said, since we have such a unique occasion," he replied patiently. Will sighed heavily, hearing that again.

"I told you I don't see any special occasion in this situation," he replied.

Hannibal adjusted the compress on the omega's forehead and wrapped him in the blanket.

"The occasion of you calling me your alpha for the first time." Hearing that, Will raised his eyebrows.

"What? I already called you that. In the hospital," he denied. "Well, you are my alpha. Literally. You belong to me officially and by law. I have papers for that." Hannibal tilted his head slightly. He knew this was an attempt at prevarication.

"That act of disrespectful ownership is not important," Hannibal announced, as if Will had mentioned an unimportant piece of paper, a receipt from the coffee shop. "However, that was not what you meant, Will. I am well aware of this fact."

He was not interested in being a slave in the eyes of the law. If he wanted to, he would simply walk out the nearest door and disappear from the radar. There were no such safeguards that would be able to permanently keep him in a place he did not wish to be.

Will looked away.

"I have no idea what else I would have meant," he replied calmly, firmly. Hannibal narrowed his eyes. He reached out a hand to cup the omega's face. He released his pheromones intensively, surrounding the omega with them like a mist. He directed his gaze to himself.

"I heard more. And I felt more in your scent."

Will narrowed his eyes, responding to the gaze.

"...I was in survival mode under very strong emotions," he explained. Omegas, after all, are creatures driven by emotions and instincts. Hannibal tilted his head slightly, observing Will keenly.

"You were not. You were at peace with the thought of receiving death from my hand. With no willingness to fight it if I decide to give it to you."

Will looked him in the eye for a moment in silence before sighing quietly.

"...I told you at the beginning that I don't want to die. It wasn't peace nor willingness to die. It was the awareness that fighting is pointless," he whispered. Hannibal leaned down, adjusting the omega's pillow. Will's nostrils were filled with his pheromones with this movement. He wiggled them, inhaling the alpha's scent.

"I believe you did. But that doesn't change the fact that you didn't seem to care about survival at that point," Hannibal said. He put his nose to the omega's temple and sniffed, and when he decided that the scent wasn't alarming, he stood up. "Try to rest, please. I will clean everything and take the dogs on a walk."

Will looked at him tiredly. He exhaled quietly and nodded slightly, gratefully. He felt a pang of guilt that he hadn't thought of his own dogs during this whole situation.

"Are they okay?" he asked quietly. He guessed that the killer must have sedated them somehow.

"Of course," the alpha replied. "They're already awake and hungry. I believe Remy wasn't willing to hurt them."

The omega nodded, still inwardly upset that someone had touched his dogs in any way. He calmed down at that though and sighed, then closed his eyes, wanting to fall asleep. It didn't take him long.

***

Over the next few hours Hannibal took everything he considered high enough quality to eat from Remy's body—he skipped the kidneys, as they didn't look healthy or appetizing, the omega had probably been sick. However, he cut out and cleaned the vast majority. He prepared a feast for the dogs waiting for lunch, grinding some of the fatter, less attractive parts into their treats. He froze the excess valuable meat, neatly packaged and labeled.

He cleaned everything up and disinfected the surfaces. There wasn't a single trace of what had happened in the house. The remains of Remy's body were set on fire by Hannibal on the boat prepared by the omega himself, destroying all traces of the attempt to ensure the alpha's escape.

Then he started cooking. When Will woke up after a few hours of nap and dragged himself to the bathroom—fortunately being on strong painkillers—he was lured downstairs by the enticing aromas.
He went down the stairs carefully so as not to disturb his wound. He stood in the kitchen entrance, flaring his nostrils. His stomach twisted with hunger, but the look he gave the pan and the oven was suspicious.

"I hope you prepared something vegetarian for me," he muttered. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, indulgently, looking at him. He was wearing an apron with two crossed bloody knives, an anatomical heart in the middle, and the caption "Nothing here is vegetarian." It was most likely a fan apron brought by Remy among the things for him. Will raised his eyebrows skeptically and gasped quietly.

Well, he guessed he got his answer.

"Don't force yourself tinto such ridiculous labels, please. You are too intelligent for that," Hannibal said, looking at Will. Will indignantly looked back at him.

"Excuse me?"

"People who eat veal or mutton are not treated as a separate subspecies of humans. This is a matter of taste. And you cannot say whether you like the taste or not without experiencing it first," he aptly noted.

Will frowned.

"But I can say I am disgusted by the mere thought of eating shit without eating shit," he replied. Hannibal stopped, looking at the younger man more intensely.

"And do you consider my cooking to be equal to ‘shit’, Will?"

"You know I don't. It wasn't a comparison, just an explanation why I am able to say that I don't want to try it," he replied calmly. Hannibal tilted his head slightly, looking at him. He slowly plucked a sprig of rosemary.

"The reluctance to eat feces is natural. Together with digested food, our body gets rid of what is unnecessary, including bacteria and potential parasites. This is not food, and humans are not such a nutritionally desperate species. Meat, on the other hand, is a natural and incredibly valuable part of our diet. This society has just placed an artificially created stigma on the consumption of very specific kinds of meat," he replied patiently.

He cut into a steak that had been resting, laid on a board, covered with cloves of browned garlic, and doused with rosemary butter. The meat was perfect, tender, and slicing under the knife without falling apart. At the same time, the blade went through it like butter. It was moist, soft, and aromatic, with browned skin.

Hannibal speared a slice of steak on his fork and walked closer to the omega. He looked at him expectantly, raising his eyebrows expressively.

"I promise you will not grow a pair of horns nor a tail after tasting the bite. I believe there will also be no ‘cannibal’ sign suddenly appearing on your forehead."

Will swallowed. He stepped back slightly, glancing uncertainly at his fork. He felt saliva welling up in his mouth.
Why did it smell so good? Plus, he was incredibly hungry.

"I... I wouldn't... really like to do it..." he mumbled and turned to flee the kitchen.

"Stay, please," he heard though. Firmly, but gently. He didn't know why he listened, his body reacted instinctively, without his will. Hannibal cupped the omega's face with his hand and looked into his eyes. He could smell the alpha's strong pheromones very close and flared his nostrils, feeling the heat growing inside his veins.

"I put my heart into it, and I would be thrilled to share the meal with you. Could you try a small bite for me, Will?" Hannibal asked, running his fingertips over Will's lower lip.

The omega felt a shiver run down his spine. His instincts reacted strongly, telling him to bare his neck, obey, serve, and please. He took a breath, trying to control himself.

"J-just one," he reserved and parted his lips to allow the alpha to slip a piece of meat onto his tongue. Hannibal smiled slightly, clearly pleased with him, which additionally caressed the omega's natural instincts.

He made the alpha proud.

"Alright," agreed Hannibal. Slowly, with an almost intimate gesture, he slipped the bite of juicy, melt-in-your-mouth steak onto Will's tongue.

Not taking his eyes off the alpha's eyes, Will began to chew slowly. A wave of flavor flooded his palate. He had to hold back a groan. Hannibal's gaze pierced through his skull, intimidating.

He swallowed hard and looked away with difficulty.

"I did as you asked. Now return the favor, please, and prepare something vegetarian for me," he whispered and left the kitchen quickly. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, worried, seeing his escape. He felt a hint of sadness, but at the same time tilted his head, looking after the omega intensely.

He knew that it wasn't reluctance. He also knew that Will had enjoyed the meat. He must have had many barriers in his head, though.

Hannibal sighed. Well, clearly, there was no point in celebrating together.

"Of course," he replied. The omega had agreed to take this first, most important step, and that was already a lot. Hannibal returned to the fridge to, in defiance of his apron, prepare something vegetarian.

***

"Thank you," Will said gratefully, seeing the vegetarian portion prepared for him.

He tried not to think about what he had done, what he had eaten (or rather, who) and how damn delicious it (he) was. He just didn't want to offend the Ripper, that would be dangerous. Yes, the omega did it for his own safety.

He sat down at the table. Next to the plate, he saw the prepared medicines to take.

"That murder tableau was a warning. For me. And I underestimated it, ignored it," he muttered quietly, grabbing his fork. Hannibal tilted his head slightly.

"I don't believe it was a warning at all. Remy was too focused on achieving his goal—me, in specific—to think about anyone else. He was just removing the obstacles when they occurred," he replied. "I don't think there was direct hostility for you in him. Well, at least until the momentI chose you over him."

Will flinched, hearing Hannibal's last words. He bowed his head slightly lower, feeling the heat on his cheeks and the faster beating of his heart.

How was he supposed to understand that?

Hannibal placed the last plate of smoked salmon salad on the table. He was perfectly dressed, in an immaculate white shirt and ironed dark trousers, with his hair styled. The clothes in his size must have been prepared by Remy as well.

He sat down in his seat.

"Please, enjoy. And feel invited to try any part of non-vegetarian options as well, if something catches your attention. However, there is no need for you to worry, as no dish that is on your left contains meat."

Will looked at the dishes. He, unlike the elegantly dressed Hannibal, was wearing his night clothes of sweatpant shorts and a t-shirt. It didn't seem to bother him, but his gaze averted a few times towards the alpha dressed in this way.

"Yeah, thanks, I appreciate it," he mumbled. Hannibal smiled slightly.

"You're welcome."

All the food on the table looked delicious, beautifully decorated, arranged, and artistically covered with intense sauces and additions. Even the salad looked like a work of art.

Will felt guilty because he didn't feel guilty about the food on his table made of human flesh. He should have, it was wrong, but he had to accept the unpleasant truth. He didn't feel bad. And that's why he felt bad. What did that say about him?

He put on his plate something that looked like a vegetarian casserole and began to eat.

"Yes," he said suddenly after a moment of eating in silence.

Hannibal froze with his fork raised to his mouth, raising his gaze at him.

"Yes, I agree to your offer."

Hannibal froze. He looked into Will's eyes, and the hair on the back of his neck stood up slightly. His heart beat faster. From emotions, from excitement, from happiness. He understood immediately what Will had agreed to. After a moment, however, a bitter realization flooded him as he realized his motives. He narrowed his eyes slowly.

"My help in thwarting Remy's attack wasn't a transaction, Will. I didn't mean to make you feel grateful in the way of expecting something from you."

Will raised his eyebrows at these words. He blinked in surprise, and after a moment he smiled with amusement.

"A commendable moral compass, especially for a cannibalistic serial killer," he replied. The alpha smiled indulgently, although a bit wryly.

"This is not a moral compass, but a sense of dignity and respect for another valuable person." Will swallowed a piece of eggplant, hearing this and feeling something warm inside. He smiled slightly.

"I didn't agree because of ‘a transaction’. I agreed because I trust you more now," Will said seriously, looking the alpha in the eye. "Besides, I don't need a reason. You are mine to use as I please," he added teasingly. Hannibal blinked. After a moment... he blushed, embarrassed like a little boy, and smiled shyly. He cleared his throat, lowering his head. His heart beat faster, filling with warmth.

"I am happy to hear it then." Will watched him carefully, curiously, a slight smile on his lips.

"But I'd like to try before my heat, when I will be still conscious," he added after a moment. Hannibal swallowed a bite of Remy's heart steak, feeling his own heart grow. The hair on the back of his neck was slightly bristling with excitement.

"Of course," he said. "However, I believe you wouldn't like to do it tonight. Your wounds need some time to heal for everything to be comfortable for you."

"Yeah, and you have stitches as well. Even more," the omega replied, irritated that Hannibal had considered his condition to be the main reason, even though he himself was in a worse state. He only had one wound, Hannibal still had many. It had only been a few days since his fight in the arena. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, as if he had completely forgotten about the fact of his own wounds. After a moment, he nodded, smiling slightly, charmed by the omega's concern.

"Yes, I do," he admitted. "However, I am very resistant to pain," he added. Since the fight in the arena, despite his condition, he had accomplished more than what most healthy people could have. "And, of course, I need to prepare the perfect scene." Will froze and looked up at Hannibal.

"What scene?" he asked, taken aback. The alpha raised his eyebrows, returning to his food, surprised by his surprise.

"The perfect scene for your first time. Do you have any vision? I am not sure if you prefer roses or peonies." Will looked at him as if Hannibal had grown a second head.

"I am sorry, what?" he blurted out after a moment. "Yeah, I have a vision. A bed," he added after a moment. "I don't need anything more," he said, shoving a forkful of pasta into his mouth.

Knowing Hannibal's murder tableau, should he really be so surprised?

"I will find something suitable. Write down your credit card information for me, please," said Hannibal. "I shall prepare everything in a few days. Please be ready, as the FBI will probably call you tomorrow, telling you about the body that remains on the boat in the middle of the lake. There will be no traces left, everything is alright, but you must stay calm and act as usual. Can you do that for me, Will?" he asked before popping a bite of meat into his mouth.

Will stood still, staring at him in disbelief, overwhelmed by this information. "Excuse me, what the fuck?" he gasped after a moment. "You were supposed to get rid of the body so it wouldn't be found at all!" he shouted angrily, putting down his fork.

"Indeed, but that would be suspicious and would put you at more risk when it finally and unavoidably would be found and revealed to be my obsessive fan," Hannibal explained patiently, gently. "The body and boat were burned, with nothing left that can be examined. There are no traces on them linking us to the crime. When they call you there, you will tell them the truth. That dear Remy had embarked on a suicide journey after he killed the alpha near the lake," he added, putting a bite of heart into his mouth. Will looked at him, still unconvinced, his face brimming with frustration.

Hannibal put down his fork.
"I believe that such a person as Remy would have been particularly loud with his interests." mHe reached out a hand. He leaned down and cupped the omega's face, stroking his cheek gently with his thumb. Will flinched in surprise at the touch, staring at Hannibal. "There will be no unwanted attention on you," Hannibal reassured gently, with complete conviction. "I did everything perfectly. You just need to tell the FBI what they want to hear. Exactly like you are doing at every crime scene." Will exhaled, letting out a hiss of air. He nodded slightly after a moment.

"I will try," he finally replied, calming down slightly. The alpha smiled, making Will feel a strange, overwhelming warmth radiating from that smile, as if Hannibal were a bright sun.

"And you will not buy flowers or anything else, or I will change my mind," Will added, returning to the previous topic, and continued eating. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, looking deeply offended and worried by such a proposal. The smile fell from his lips.

"However, you deserve your proper first time, Will. I believe you've never had any kind of sex, isn't it correct?

Will blushed and tensed at that.

"It doesn't matter," he huffed. "I'm almost forty. I don't need any rom-com-like scenes. We're only doing it for practice," he added, finishing his pasta. He stood up, glad for the opportunity to escape. "I am going back to bed," he added. Hannibal looked at him with shining eyes, his lips on his cup of tea. The alpha in him approved, knowing that Will was clean. Like a blank, unwritten slate. He couldn't even be outraged at the mention of doing it only for practice.

"Wonderful," he said. He licked his lips unconsciously. After a moment, however, he cleared his throat, standing up. He motioned Will upstairs. "I believe we will be more comfortable upstairs," he said. "Please, go take a bath, and I will change the sheets. Or perhaps would you like my assistance during bathing?" Will looked at him questioningly, with a hint of indignation. He gasped quietly.

"We?" he repeated, raising his eyebrows. "My bed is downstairs. And no, I don't need help, thank you," he replied.

Hannibal tilted his head slightly. He didn't push it, though. It was reassuring that the omega wasn't traumatized by what had happened.

"Alright then."

Will went to the bathroom, where he took a quick shower and changed bandages. In just his boxers, with damp hair, he went downstairs to his bed. However, he did not expect to see the alpha already lying there, waiting for him, also just in his silky boxers. Next to him, on a nightstand, there was a freshly made cup of tea. The omega stopped, surprised. He glanced around his bed and Hannibal in it and sighed heavily.

"I don't believe I invited you here tonight," he muttered. He lay down on the free half and drank a few sips of tea. The cannibal looked at him.

"Why? Is my presence unwanted?" He asked, raising his head. He had a book in his hand. It wasn't one of Will's, so he must have undoubtedly brought it here from Remy's boat.

Will snorted quietly.

"Even if not, entering someone's bed without an invitation is rude. And you are starting to act suspiciously relaxed here," he muttered. He turned his back to Hannibal and wrapped the blanket around him, closing his eyes. Hannibal tilted his head slightly, watching him.

"I was certain you would enjoy my presence. You slept better in my arms. However, if you feel uncomfortable, I can go," he replied reluctantly, getting up.

"I didn't say that. Just that it would be nice to be asked beforehand," he muttered quietly, not thinking about the fact that if Hannibal actually asked, he would have to answer. "We are both wounded though; it would be more comfortable for you in your own bed."

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, looking at Will curiously.

"My wounds are not important in this matter," he denied calmly. "Alright then. Do you wish me to stay in your bed, Will?" Will inhaled, and his heart beat faster. He hadn't expected that. That he would have to clearly express his desire. Or lack thereof.
He cleared his throat, wrapping the blanket around himself more tightly.

"Whatever... I don't really mind," he finally replied. Hannibal smiled and lay closer to the omega.

"I actually destroyed part of the bed upstairs. I had to break the wood to remove chains. I apologize," he said, as if talking about a broken plate, sliding under the covers. Will froze when he heard that.

"Great," he gasped, understanding that Hannibal had to sleep with him because he had no other option. And the omega couldn't even be mad at him for that, because thanks to him he was alive. "I will fix it tomorrow," he mumbled, covering himself with the covers and closing his eyes. Hannibal smiled surreptitiously. He stuck out his arm in a silent invitation but didn't interfere in the omega's personal space.

"I believe there is no need to hurry," he mumbled. "Good night, Will."

"G'night," Will muttered without moving. He was lying on his side, his back to the alpha, so he couldn't see Hannibal's outstretched arm, but it was doubtful he would take advantage. It didn't change the fact that he also moved closer to the alpha during sleep that night, snuggling up to the larger body. He was still sweating heavily and overheating, but he slept peacefully, without any nightmares. His hand slid along Hannibal's stomach along the strand of hair, and he pressed his warm forehead against the alpha's shoulder. Will buried his nose in his hair and flared his nostrils, letting out a quiet purr.

It was in this position that Will woke up when his phone next to him rang at eight in the morning. The display showed Jack's name, and someone was nervously, impatiently knocking on the front door.

Will raised his eyebrows and blinked sleepily. His eyes were glossy, clouded with sleep. He didn't know what was happening. He was warm, soft, and comfortable. The dogs were milling around the door.
Will looked in their direction and frowned, seeing a familiar figure behind the glass door.

This time he didn't even pay attention to how close he was to the alpha. He grabbed his phone and frowned, struggling to read the name on the screen. He huffed in irritation. He answered without moving away from Hannibal.

"Jack. What do you want? I'm sick, and it's early." He felt a hand tangling in his hair and heard the alpha growl softly in his ear. Hannibal wasn't sleeping, but he didn't interfere, knowing that it would only bring more unwanted attention to Will. So he stroked his curls soothingly. Will wasn't even aware that he had narrowed his eyes in contentment like a pet kitten.

Jack, meanwhile, was clearly nervous and agitated.

"I know it's fucking early," he replied. "But we found another body. Whatever was left from it. We need you there, it's close to your house. I'm waiting, so move your ass."

Will frowned, irritated.

"First, it'd be nice to hear a fuckin' magic word; second, I can be there at noon. I have fuckin' encephalitis, Jack, and it's thanks to this job. So you will wait. And stop harassin' my door," he announced firmly. His southern accent could be heard, probably due to him still being sleepy and his annoyance. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly. The nasty accent that would usually annoy him incredibly, in the performance of a sleepy Will suddenly sounded... incredibly charming and innocent.

"But Will-..." Jack wanted to protest.

"Send me an address and see you there," Will added and hung up. He threw the phone to the side and closed his eyes, his head falling back on the pillow with a sigh. Hannibal looked at him with a light, warm smile, pushing his curls behind his ear.

"That was rude," he murmured in his ear, sounding paradoxically... pleased. Will snorted.

"No. Calling me during my sick days and yelling orders without a single ‘please’ was rude. He didn't even ask how I felt. Fuck him," he replied firmly. He took a breath and closed his eyes, pressing his cheek against the alpha's shoulder, inhaling his pleasant scent.

He didn’t have an allergic reaction to Hannibal’s closeness like last time. If they were going to have sex, it would be weird. They could start to get used to each other's intimacy. Hannibal smiled and sniffed his hair. He gave a quiet hum of approval.
"And how do you feel?" he murmured in his ear. "Would you like me to stay a little while or go and prepare a coffee to bring you to bed?" Will felt a pleasant shiver run down his spine.

What a perfect question.

"You are spoiling me," he replied quietly. If Hannibal keeps acting like this, like a perfect butler, Will really will get spoiled. "Stay. I have time until noon. We can lie a little longer. And then you can bring me coffee," he murmured contentedly. He turned on his side slowly, careful of his wound, his back to the alpha.

Hannibal rubbed his nose against the younger man’s neck and pressed it into the hollow of his neck, dangerously close to the exposed scent gland, sniffing. He could smell the omega's intense scent, his natural, sweet, fever-tinged, and sweaty. The scent gland was still swollen. The body needed time to heal. Will swallowed but didn't react to this gesture. The alpha smacked his lips as if he had a treat under his nose.

"With pleasure. I may actually be your company if you want the FBI not to bother you too much."
The omega smiled in amusement.

"Tempting, but I think they would bother me even more," he murmured. He took a deep breath and fixed his gaze on his dogs. They were lying lazily by the fireplace, which showed that they must have eaten while he was still asleep.

"Do you have a mate, Hannibal? Somewhere? Someone who misses you, awaits you? Omega or not," Will asked suddenly after a moment of silence. He knew that old-money alphas from noble families did not usually mate with betas, but Hannibal was different in many ways, so Will would not be surprised. The alpha tilted his head. He raised his eyebrows slightly, curiously, looking at him.

"Would you be jealous if I did?" Hannibal asked, curious about Will's reaction. He played with his curls and ran the pad of his thumb over the swollen scent gland in a gentle caress. Will shivered slightly at the feeling and covered it with his hand. It was very sensitive, and touching it there was too stimulating.

"No, but I wouldn't want to be the reason for cheating," he replied.

"I do not," the alpha denied, looking at him. He smiled with amusement, albeit wryly. "There are not many people able to truly see me. And even less that I could consider appropriate for being a candidate for my mate. Mates are supposed to be equal after all. I was also very attached to my sense of freedom." Will raised his eyebrows slightly at that.

"I see," he replied. "You were? You’re not anymore?" he asked quietly.

Hannibal didn't take the opportunity to reclaim his freedom after all. The alpha narrowed his eyes.

"Perhaps I still am; however, my sense of freedom itself changed," he replied. Well, he didn't feel too out of control either, which would probably have triggered his desire to fight for position much more.

Will turned his head over his shoulder, curious.

"Changed? How?" he asked. Just a few days had passed.

"I believe I've focused my freedom more on the point of being around the person I want to be," the cannibal replied, looking Will straight in the eyes intensely.

Will froze, his eyes widening. His mouth parted, but he didn't say anything. His heart beat faster.

Hannibal tilted his head.

"Are you trying to discuss becoming my mate, Will?" Hearing this, the omega tensed nervously and gasped.

"What? No," he replied, frowning. "I just wanted to know. I wouldn't like to destroy someone else's relationship or force you to help me with my heat while you have someone."

Hannibal smiled in amusement. He ran his nose along the back of his neck.

"It's not a problem in this case," he assured. "I have no one important but you, Will."

Will felt heat in his cheeks. His heart was pounding like crazy. His scent, the embarrassment, the confusion, the nervousness, betrayed him. He felt hot as hell.

"...good," he whispered quietly, because that was all he could manage to articulate.

They had known each other for only a few days, and Will had been directly responsible for the Chesapeake Ripper's great defeat, for his capture, for depriving him of all his goods, his humanity, his freedom. He didn't understand why the man didn't hate him. Hannibal's gaze, as he watched him, was gentle, warm. The alpha reached out a hand to grab the omega's chin, directing his gaze to him. He ran his fingertips over his lip.

"You look charming with your cheeks all red. Almost as delicious as your scent is. It's difficult not to take a bite."

Will felt an even greater heat hit his face and send shivers through his whole body. He could hardly stand the alpha's gaze. He swallowed, feeling a hint of nervousness and fear at the mention of the bite. He had no certainty that the Ripper wasn't speaking literally and wouldn't turn words into action. Even non-cannibalistic alphas were capable of tearing out omegas' throats during particularly strong ruts. And at the same time, his treacherous body reacted illogically, and the omega felt the moisture between his thighs. His scent intensified, now being a bittersweet mix of arousal and fear. Hannibal inhaled the scent like an appetizing mixture, tilting his head toward the omega. He narrowed his eyes.

"Maybe we could allow ourselves to take... just a little nibble," he whispered directly into his lips, almost brushing them with his own lips. The alpha's hand slipped between the omega's legs.

Will exhaled sharply, his warm breath fanning the alpha's lips.

"N-no... we can't..." he whispered, but did nothing to stop it, to protest. "Our wounds," he recalled weakly, and at the same time spread his thighs slightly, feeling the hand between

them. He shivered, feeling his instincts come to the fore. The alpha's scent drugged him, and the knowledge of who this alpha was seemed to affect him even more. Hannibal let out a quiet groan, pleased with the omega's body's reaction. So beautiful.

He instinctively released his pheromones more, practically enveloping Will with them. He ran his thumb over his sensitive folds through his underwear.

"Just a nibble," he whispered to Will, clearly turned on. The omega moaned quietly, his hips twitched. The material of his shorts started to dampen.

Hannibal slowly moved lower to nibble on the omega's belly. He lifted his gaze to his, moving down the fabric of his underwear. He kissed the delicate mound of his clit before running his tongue over it.

"Uhhnm..." Will groaned, frowning. He slid his hand into Hannibal's hair, combing through it lightly. The alpha could taste the sweet moisture soaked into the wet material on his tongue. The scent of the omega's arousal was intensifying. Hannibal let out a low, satisfied growl, inhaling it. His own pants felt tighter.

"Good boy..." he purred right into Will's underwear and pulled his shorts aside to reveal his wet pussy. He sniffed at it, exhaling his warm breath over it, before he smacked his lips and stuck his tongue inside, needing to taste that sweet nectar.

Will arched so violently that his wound screamed with pain, and the stitches stretched. He moaned loudly, partly with pleasure, partly with pain. He tightened his fingers in Hannibal's hair and spread his thighs wider.

"AhNnn, oh fuck..." he gasped, shocked by what the alpha had done, or maybe by the intensity of the sensation. He had never been touched there before. Hannibal purred directly into his pussy, licking his wet lips.

"Not yet," he murmured, parting his lips slightly. "Be a good boy and lie still. We wouldn't want your wound to reopen." He stuck his tongue in again, probing like a bear in a beehive full of sweet honey. Will cried out loudly, bucking his hips.

"AhhNnmm...!

These sensations were incomparable to anything he had ever experienced before. And that wasn't the end yet.

Sticking his tongue out, Hannibal ran it up, and after a moment he latched onto his clit and sucked. Will screamed, opening his eyes wider and tugging on the alpha's hair.

"Oh god! So good..." he croaked. Even more slick appeared, running down his thighs now soaking the sheet. Hannibal purred, watching those beautiful, delightful reactions. He nibbled on the omega's thigh with his teeth, possessively leaving a trace of his fangs on its inside.

Suddenly a loud knocking sound came from behind the entrance door.

"Will?!," Jack called, trying to look inside through the window, when he heard Will's cry. "Are you okay?! Do you need help?"
Will froze, terrified.

Had Jack been standing there the whole time, waiting?!

"I-I'm fine...!" he shouted back, before Jack could think about breaking the door down. And then he jumped up abruptly, wincing in pain when his wound strained and roughly pushed Hannibal away from him. The alpha huffed like an unhappy animal, raising his eyebrows slightly in question. He looked at Will with shiny eyes and licked his lips.

"Just ignore it, Will," Hannibal mumbled, trying to wrap his arm around his waist and pull him closer. Will had to slap him like a pushy dog and hiss at him, baring his fangs in warning.

"Damn it..." Will growled and got out of bed, out of breath, red, and with damp thighs. "He almost caught us! I'm going to take a shower," he announced and quickly walked upstairs. Hannibal watched his back as the omega walked away. He closed his eyes for a moment, then glanced toward the door. He exhaled through his nostrils.

He really didn't understand why Will wouldn't let him kill Jack.

Chapter End Notes

I hoped you enjoyed! Please, leave a comment!
Feel free to say hello to me on Twitter! @VixiakArt <3

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

> Will froze, his eyes widening in horror. The beast's dark eyes were menacing, filled with anger, wild and animalistic, as the alpha lowered his head. He exposed part of the omega's neck, where his swollen, sensitive scent gland was located, exposing massive, sharp teeth even for an alpha.

Chapter Notes

> Hello guys! Here is another chapter for you :)
> Thanks to everyone for comments and kudos, I appreciate your support!
>
> Beta by amazing @Redeye17, thank you <3
>
> A little warning just in case, there will be a slight dub-con in this chapter.
> I must say that this one was my favourite to write!

Will came downstairs a few minutes later, already dressed in black jeans and a plaid shirt. He put his glasses on his nose.

"I'm going with Jack to see your mess," he muttered wryly. "Please behave," he added, without much conviction and sounding resigned. It was clear, however, that he did not intend to chain Hannibal to the bed this time or limit him in any way.

"I always do," the alpha said from behind him, already perfectly dressed, although only a few minutes had passed. He handed Will a thermos with hot, fresh coffee and a quick breakfast packed in a tupperware. "French toast and a fried egg with avocado, decorated with cherry tomatoes and basil."

Will froze, looking at the box with surprise. He raised his eyebrows high. No one had ever made him a second breakfast for work. Or even for school. "I won't be there so long... but thank you," he replied quietly, taking the tupperware from the alpha. "Are you perfectly sure you don't want my support at the crime scene? I certainly would be helpful."

Will took a deep breath.

"I know you would, but no. I will handle it. Just stay with the rest of my dogs and be good," he replied and lifted the corner of his mouth teasingly. Hannibal raised his eyebrows higher, indulgently, hearing that phrase.

"Come back soon. I still haven't received my bite."

Will blushed slightly and looked away, hearing that. He swallowed, not responding. And then he headed for the exit, where Jack was waiting for him in his car in front of the house. Hannibal watched through the window as Will got into the car. His and Jack's eyes met for a moment, and Hannibal narrowed his eyes, piercing the other alpha with his gaze.

Jack frowned, starting the engine.

"Why won't you bring him in for interrogation if he has some info? I'm sick of thinking about you having that murderer in your home."

"I will interrogate him better by myself; he won't cooperate with you," Will replied calmly. "You know that I know how to talk with murderers. He behaves surprisingly well," he added, fastening his seat belt. Jack snorted, looking reluctantly toward the window, even though Hannibal was no longer there.

"That's even more dangerous with a beast like this. He can't be trusted."

Will sighed heavily.

"I know, Jack, and I don't trust him," he replied. It wasn't even a complete lie. You could never let your guard down completely around wild beasts. No matter how well-tamed. "Make it quick, Jack, I really feel like shit."

The alpha sighed, but started the engine and headed for the crime scene. As they drove along the straight road that bordered the lake, he thrust the files at Will to look through. The body of the omega had been found burned, his identity completely unrecognizable. Gender and basic information about age and height could only be determined from the bones.

Will narrowed his eyes.

"Looks like an accident. Boat engine failure, perhaps," he commented.

"It looks like the boat sank after the body was fully burned. Otherwise, the water would have extinguished the fire. The body must have burned much faster than the boat caught fire," Jack commented, glancing at him. "We ruled out an engine explosion."

Will mumbled something quietly under his breath in acknowledgement as he looked through the files.

He had to admit that Hannibal had done a good job. He really knew his stuff.

Jack raised his eyebrows, looking at the container of breakfast and coffee that Will was holding.

"Since when do you bring breakfast with you?" Will froze for a moment. Then he narrowed his eyes.

"Since I was diagnosed with encephalitis, Jack, and a better diet is doctor's orders," he muttered, pleased with how wisely he had come out with an excuse. "I must start living healthier."

"Oh," Jack muttered. Undoubtedly surprised, but he didn't question it. He glanced at the tomatoes, cut into heart shapes, visible through the clear container. "You really took that seriously. I didn't know it was that bad."

"It is that bad," Will replied gruffly.

They stopped on the other side of the lake, where there was a place fenced off with police tape. There were ashes lying on the grass and parts of a half-burnt boat pulled out of the water. Will looked at the crime scene carefully. He swept his gaze around. Then he closed his eyes to do his job.

The murderer felt no remorse, not even a hint of sadness. He looked at the body lying before him with pity... and a hint of reluctance.

It didn't matter that the omega wanted him released.

He had hurt Will. He deserved to die in agony, to be slowly devoured alive to keep the meat fresh. But they didn't have time for that.

Will's mind was awash with emotions. Anger. Possessiveness and caring at the same time. There was no hesitation in them, though.

Remy never had a chance of returning alive from this expedition. It had been suicidal from the beginning. Hannibal wouldn't let anyone who wasn't worthy of him get close to him. Someone who brazenly thought they could just come and take over a spot already reserved for someone special.

When Will opened his eyelids, leaving Hannibal's mind, not for the first time, he was shaken, but not like he usually was. He wasn't scared by the Ripper's cruelty, his anger, his lack of emotions. It wasn't there now. Unlike his other murders, cold and methodical, like getting rid of garbage, this was the first time Will felt a lot of emotions and feelings. Connected to himself.

His breathing quickened, and he trembled slightly. He had to hold back a smile.

He exhaled, knowing that he was being watched by Jack. And everyone at the crime scene.

"This isn't the work of any of our killers. It was just a lover’s quarrel. One became furious knowing this one cheated on him. He killed him out of anger and then burned everything to cover traces," Will fabricated. "Shame." It was a nice boat.

Jack looked at him carefully. After a moment, he frowned slightly and rubbed his nose, undoubtedly displeased. However, he had no reason not to believe Will.

"That's quite an ugly argument," he commented wryly. He sighed and looked at Will.

"Something about the killer?" Will shook his head.

"Nothing extraordinary. He’s never killed before, and he panicked but was able to act logically," he replied. "I don't think it's a job for the FBI, rather typical homicide," he added, shrugging.

Jack looked at him for a moment before frowning slightly and sighed heavily again. "Guess they just wasted our time," he muttered, frustrated. He immediately started shouting at people, telling them to pack up their gear, and walked away to make a phone call, probably to complain that they had been called here for no reason. It was clearly going to take him a while before he took the omega home.

As Will was pulling out his food container, wanting to eat breakfast, he heard a familiar voice behind him.

"Hi, Will," Beverly said. Will flinched and turned to her. He nodded slightly.

Bev smiled, coming closer and sitting down beside him as they faced the lake.

"How do you feel? I actually feel like shit after... well, what I've pulled you into. This whole Chesapeake Ripper fight." Will raised his eyebrows.

"After you pulled me into what?" he asked without understanding.

"You know. I took you to that fight, and now you have the freaking Ripper in your house. I feel terrible."

Will shook his head.

"Don't be. It wasn't your decision, and he isn't a bad roommate. He is grateful to have had his life saved, so he will help with his yet unresolved cases," he announced, sticking to that version.

Will popped a tomato into his mouth. Beverly froze, paying attention to it. She raised her eyebrows and reached out, grabbing another tomato cut into the shape of a heart.

"Oh. Do you have an admirer?"

Will froze. He looked at the woman questioningly, and seeing her gaze pointed to his lunch box, he felt a blush on his cheeks.

"Yes. Me. I started taking care of myself more," he grumbled and ate another tomato. His reaction, however, told the astute woman everything. He lifted the box toward Bev invitingly. "Have some."

"Thanks," she replied, grabbing a quarter of elegantly cut toast, but she didn't take her penetrating gaze off the omega. She bit into it and gasped. "Holy shit. It's fucking great. Whoever wants to take you on a date, Will, agree or I will do it myself," she commented,

looking at Will significantly. "With someone cooking this good? Where do I sign the wedding papers?" she snorted. He took a bite of toast and swallowed it. "You're lucky."

Will let out a breath.

"...right."

Bev grabbed one of the roasted mini sausages from the other compartment of the lunchbox. Will could see that these were clearly homemade. Seeing this, Will panicked and snatched the sausage from her hand. Bev blinked, confused, and the omega sputtered at her questioning look. He began to think nervously of some explanation.

"Uhm... These are made with my encephalitis medicines!" he announced after a moment. "The body absorbs it better with proteins," he said. "But you could get diarrhea." Beverly eyed him suspiciously, but then seemed to accept it. She shrugged.

"Okay," she said, thankfully not probing. She looked at him with concern. "I actually came in my car, I can take you home if you want?" Will took a deep breath and put his lunchbox away. He nodded slightly.

"Yeah, you could give me a ride. I came here with Jack, but I prefer your company much more," he mumbled, sitting up. Beverly smiled in amusement.

"I can't blame you," she said, looking at Jack still fussing over the phone. She stood up. "Okay. Come on, I think we have nothing more to do here."

***

Beverly gave him a ride home, and Will thanked her and shut the car door. When he disappeared inside his house, however, she realized that Will had left his lunchbox in the car.

She frowned slightly, then followed him to return it to him. She knocked on the door, and when she didn't hear an answer, she simply opened it.

"Hey, Will?" she called, peeking inside cautiously. "Sorry, but you forgot your..." she began, but froze when she saw Will pressed against the couch by the larger body of the very familiar alpha.

Will fidgeted, surprised by the attack on himself as soon as he had crossed the threshold.

"Hannibal, what are you doing?! Stop...!"

He felt like he had come home to a longing, untrained dog as he attempted to push him away without success.

“What the fuck?” Hearing Bev's voice, Will squealed in panic before kicking the alpha painfully in the stomach, then jumping off the couch. Hannibal growled, briefly baring his fangs, when Will hit his wound.

"Beverly, it's...!" he began, but stopped, not knowing what to say. He stepped closer and glanced at his lunchbox in the woman's hands. "Uhm... thank you," he mumbled. Beverly, on the other hand, stood still, just looking, or rather staring, clearly frightened. Hannibal sighed, getting up from the ground.

"Miss Katz. It's a pleasure to meet you," he said politely, deliberately walking slowly to the door to stand in it, blocking a potential escape route.

"Will," Bev spoke up. She stood rigidly in place, like an animal that knows that if it tries to escape, a predator will give chase. She watched Hannibal intently, slowly moving her hand towards her weapon. The alpha only raised his eyebrows slightly, as if waiting for her next move. "What the fuck is going on here?" Will tensed up. His scent became distressed. He stepped closer, standing between Bev and Hannibal.

"You knew he was here, Bev," he said quietly. Beverly didn't look at him but gasped in disbelief.

"Yes, that *he is here* , not that you two are fucking! Where are his goddamn chains?!

Will flinched at the phrase.

"We are not fucking," he replied firmly, almost indignantly.

Well... Yet.

He lowered his gaze to her hand on the weapon.

"Please, that won't be necessary," he said, raising a reassuring hand. He glanced over his shoulder at the alpha. "Go upstairs, please," he asked, but there was something firm in his voice. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly. Will saw in his gaze that the alpha had a very specific plan for dealing with this situation. And he was probably reluctant to give it up. However, he tilted his head and, perhaps in response to the ‘please’, took a step away from the door. He nodded politely to Beverly.

"Good night, Miss Katz. I hope to see you soon, perhaps during dinner," Hannibal said, looking her straight in the eye. Then he headed upstairs quietly.

Will breathed a sigh of relief when Hannibal made no fuss and obeyed politely.

Beverly stood there, staring at him with a piercing gaze until he disappeared up the stairs. Only then did Bev look at Will.

"What the fuck?" she asked again, agitated. She stilled as the dots connected in her head. The crime scene they had just come from. A breakfast. An invitation to dinner. "What was in those sausages, Will?" Will raised his eyebrows.

"Meat, Bev," he replied.

"I know it's fucking meat! *What* meat, Will?"

"Just pork. Really, I don't have human meat in the fridge, I personally bought all the food. And he *is* a good cook, you said it yourself. Also, he behaves as you saw. He is grateful for me saving his life," he said calmly, trying to sound as dry and emotionless as possible. The woman looked at him in disbelief, her eyes widening. Well, at least she had already moved her hand away from the gun.

"It's the Chesapeake-fucking-Ripper, Will," she reminded emphatically. "You put him behind the bars yourself, remember? He is a cold-blooded psychopath. Sure, he behaves, you have repeatedly told us that he manipulates people perfectly."

Will nodded.

"And I know it better than anyone. I am the best person to handle him," he said firmly.

She covered her eyes with her hand. After a moment... she snorted, probably from the helplessness and absurdity of the situation.

"You really are going to fuck him, aren't you?" Will blushed slightly but didn't look away.

"Yes," he confirmed.

Well, more likely I am going to let him fuck me.

"And please keep it between us. I don't need any more problems," he added, looking her in the eye with seriousness and a plea.

Bev looked at him through her fingers, looking resigned. She shook his head slightly.

"You're lucky I like you," she commented sarcastically, but didn't pursue it. Well, at least she wasn't going to report the irresponsible custody of a dangerous alpha. "But seriously, Will. You need to take care of your safety. And… everyone else's safety, probably. Why doesn't he have any chains or even a collar? What would you do if he decides to go somewhere and bring you their head for dinner? No offense, but your house isn't particularly bulletproof. Even if he *is* grateful, are you sure that he won't just… kill someone else, not you? He's a psychopath."

Will nodded, unable to argue with those words.

"He, surprisingly, liked me, as you saw. He knows that I will have problems if he does anything like that. And he isn't a typical psychopath. He is perfectly capable of emotions," he replied. He glanced up the stairs for a moment before returning his gaze to Bev.

"He was chained and collared. He freed himself when I had a seizure and took me to the hospital. So I stopped doing that," he explained. The woman's eyes widened at that, clearly surprised. Will sighed. "He was sent to the arena to die, he lost everything, he is a literal slave now. It's not like he is on vacation here. I am keeping an eye on him, and he promised to cooperate with his victims we don't know about." Bev looked at him doubtfully and with a slight, indulgently amused smile.

"So what? Are you going to keep him here like your perfect housewife? And what after that, when you get all the info he can give?" he asked.

Will shrugged.

"I wanted to keep him here like a pet, but he decided to be a housewife," he replied. He didn't answer the second question because he didn't know. Bev was silent for a moment before she snorted bitterly under her breath.

"It's either the weirdest love story I've ever heard or the stupidest way to die that will be forever written on your grave." Will flinched nervously at the sound of the word ‘love’.

"No one said anything about love. It's more like… symbiosis," he stated. "And actually, you're just as guilty. I ended up in this situation because of your invitation," he muttered. Bev just sighed heavily, painfully aware of that fact.

"I know. And this is why I don't want the Ripper to just run around," she commented sarcastically. "I wouldn't have invited you, knowing you would risk your life. It was supposed to be your celebration," she sighed before raising his eyebrows at the omega. "Does Jack know?" Will shrugged.

"About the Ripper wandering around my house? Yes. And Alana as well. But he doesn't know about the rest, so please, keep things that way," he mumbled. He picked up his lunch box. Bev snorted at the way he twisted her words to cover up his real answer so it wouldn't sound so bad.

"So they know shit about what's going on."

Will sighed, not acknowledging it.

"I should check on him." Beverly nodded. She looked at him again, then hugged him tightly. Will froze, too surprised to hug back.

"Take care about yourself," the woman instructed. "If you need anything, you have my number. Don't get yourself killed." Will smiled nervously.

"I won't."

When Bev left, Will put his lunchbox on the table with a sigh and slowly walked up the stairs. Hannibal was fixing the stitches on his wound, which had opened after Will's kick. He was sitting on the bed. He looked up at him when he heard the omega entering.

"And how did it go?" he asked. There was a hint of curiosity in his voice, wondering if they would have fresh meat for dinner.

Will looked at him dryly.

"Better than it should have been in this situation," he replied. "What the hell was that, Hannibal? Are you an animal? That also rhymes somehow. You act like you should be chained," he said with irritation, not even feeling sympathy or remorse at the sight of the alpha's open wound. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, surprised by this attack.

"I was just happy to see you," he replied. How could he even scold him for something like that? "You were gonee for a long time. Besides, I want to remind you that you didn't lock the door either."

Will gasped and looked at him in disbelief.

"You just described a dog! An untrained puppy! I must check to see that there's no pee or bitten furniture!" he replied irritably. His dogs, all strays, behaved better.

The alpha raised an eyebrow in indignation at that insinuation. He had the best of manners. And he certainly did not identify as a dog.

"Excuse me, Will, I would like to emphasize that I didn’t kill the intruder that threatened both of our safety, only because you asked me not to. I was going to welcome you with coffee and a massage, but we were interrupted."

Will looked at him, not amused.

"You threw me at the couch and pushed me to it with your body before I was able to say anything!" he huffed. The alpha tilted his head, looking as if he honestly didn't know what was wrong with his behavior. Will had been gone for a long time, and before that, Hannibal had been rudely interrupted *tasting him* in the morning. "And she wasn't an intruder, she is my friend. And I bought you thanks to her," he added. Hannibal narrowed his eyes, and Will felt his... displeasure.

The alpha didn't want Will to have anyone close to him. Anyone who was not only a potential threat but could also pull him away from the omega.

"I see," he said, slightly mollified by the last words. "Why don't you invite her to dinner then? Tomorrow, perhaps. I shall prepare something special."

Will looked at him dryly.

"Stop acting like you are a normal, friendly person from the neighborhood that everybody likes. No one likes you, and no one wants to eat your dinners," he concluded brutally. Hannibal froze, glancing at him and looking deeply offended by those words. He narrowed his eyes, straightening slightly.

"I can assure you there are many people who enjoy my dinners and my company, Will," he replied. Will had had the opportunity to meet one of those people up *close* the previous day.

The omega snorted.

"Yeah, other serial killers and cannibals; there are plenty of them indeed," he replied sarcastically.

"You are unaware of just how many people have darkness hidden inside, waiting to be revealed," the alpha replied. "However, since me being in their presence would probably be highly inconvenient for you, I believe it should be your wish that I try to become a part of your own circle of acquaintance instead."

Will narrowed his eyes.

"That's thoughtful of you, but inviting people to dinner with a stupid cannibalistic pun isn't a good way of making friends with people," he replied firmly. Hannibal raised his eyebrows in question.

"What is a good way of making them then, Will?" he asked, looking at him expectantly, waiting for Will to dazzle him with his knowledge on the subject of interpersonal relations.

Will was silent for a moment before slowly approaching him, stopping at arm's length. He looked into his eyes.

"Listening to what I say and to my orders. Showing them you are harmless and you can't hurt anyone. So, in other words, being a perfect slave when we are with other people," he replied firmly. Hannibal narrowed his eyes at the term. He tilted his head slightly.

"But that would be lying," he noted, raising his eyebrows slightly and expressively. "And lying isn't considered the best way of making friends."

He was a dangerous predator. And he was proud of that, deriving pleasure and amusement from their fear.

Will raised his eyebrows skeptically.

So murder was okay, but lying was suddenly too much for Hannibal?

"Do you believe you have to act in a specific way to be accepted, Will?" The omega narrowed his eyes.

"Yes. Because people don't like freaks. So if you don't want to sit in this home, start acting as is expected from you by my ‘circle’, that you want to befriend so much," he replied calmly. Hannibal looked at him attentively, well aware of the problems Will had with establishing relationships and with accepting himself. He fell silent for a moment and tilted his head to the side.

"And don't forget you are mine. Not the opposite," Will added firmly. Hannibal scowled, hearing the omega's last words.

"Elaborate, please."

Will raised one eyebrow.

"Elaborate about what? Don't you know the law, Hannibal?" he asked. He thought it was obvious.

"I am a serial killer and cannibal by choice, Will. This is who I am. I couldn't care less about the law, and I have multiple hidden belongings and identities to use as I please. I am here because I want to be. Because I consider you interesting."

He took a step towards the omega, standing right in front of him. He reached out his hand and raised it to cup Will's face. Will didn't step back nor lowered his gaze. He narrowed his eyes dryly, looking at the alpha defiantly.

"According to the law, you would have been dead last night. I believe you aren't pleased by how it works either. So please elaborate what you mean in words important to us."

Will was silent for a moment, irritated.

"We both know how easily you get bored. Your ‘wanting’ to be here is not enough for me. If you want to stay here, you will have to behave among other people like a good, trained slave."

Hannibal tilted his head like an animal, listening to him.

"That is not what you said, Will," the alpha replied calmly. He grabbed his chin, looking Will straight in the eye. "You said I belong to you, but not the opposite."

Will raised his eyebrows.

"Yes. You are mine. My property. Why do you think it would be the opposite?" he asked. Hannibal narrowed his eyes. And then he took a step and another one, forcing the omega to step back. Will felt his stronger pheromones. He didn't even realize when his back hit the wall. He tensed nervously and frowned.

"I am not saying it would be the opposite. I am saying that this is not an opposition, but a complement," Hannibal replied. The cannibal's stare was intense, being the full-fledged gaze of a predator. It was hard to bear and, at the same time, paradoxically hypnotizing. "You cannot possess me without being possessed, Will. But I believe you are aware of this."

Will narrowed his eyes but held that gaze, keeping eye contact that he used to avoid so much. He snorted mockingly.

"I will never let myself be possessed by you. Just like my dogs don't own me. I own them. They are dogs after all," he said venomously. Hannibal narrowed his eyes. Will sensed the spicy notes in his pheromones, warning, biting at the nose. The alpha's gaze became dangerously piercing. Although also sad.

"So I am just a dog to you, Will? Doesn't it mean anything to you, the connection we have?" Will felt a tightening inside and, at the same time, internal rebellion and irritation. His voice

of reason recalled Bev's words about Hannibal's manipulative abilities, of who he really was. There was no way he had anything in common with the Chesapeake Ripper.

What would that say about him?

"There is no connection between us. I just simply bought you because I pity you like an old broken dog that no one else wants to adopt—a little disgusting poor thing, and now I have to suffer being close to you," he drawled coldly. He felt anger hitting his mind, biting his nose with spicy notes of the alpha's scent. He frowned slightly and felt a sting in his temples in reaction to these intense emotions.

But he also felt something else. Sadness. He saw... disappointment in the alpha's eyes. Even a certain hurt at such words. Hannibal narrowed his eyes. It was a split second before these emotions were overshadowed by anger.

The alpha suddenly yanked Will away, grabbing him by his flannel shirt. The omega was thrown onto the bed brutally, until the wound at the height of his ribs throbbed with pain. He moaned but didn't have time to do anything. The larger body immediately pressed him to the bed, and the alpha's hand grabbed him by the throat. Hannibal bared his fangs.

"Suffer... being close to me, you say?" Will choked, opening his mouth. He clenched one hand around Hannibal's strangling hand and, with the other, tried to push him away by the shoulder.

"Hhhrn... let... go," he managed to choke out with difficulty. He bent his knee, trying to kick the alpha in the stomach again. His scent showed distress. He could now very easily feel how much difference there was in their strength, at least physically. Thoroughbred alphas were strong and strongly built by nature, let alone those specialized in killing.

He had seen what Hannibal had done in the arena.

He shuddered, feeling fear take over him. His scent took on bitter, repulsive notes. An omegan protection system from danger.

"You don't even know what *sufferrring* means," the alpha growled. The omega, looking at him, perhaps partly due to the lack of oxygen and his illness, his brain in a fever, saw the alpha's skin turning dark and impressive antlers growing from his skull.

Will froze, his eyes widening in horror. The beast's dark eyes were menacing, filled with anger, wild and animalistic, as the alpha lowered his head. He exposed part of the omega's neck, where his swollen, sensitive scent gland was located, exposing massive, sharp teeth even for an alpha.

"You arrre mine..." he growled throatily, sliding his hand between the omega's thighs, under his pants and boxers, tearing the material in the process. His fangs almost brushed the scent gland.

Will whimpered quietly and squeezed his eyelids shut.

"N-no...!" he protested. He shook his head, gasping for breath and clenching his thighs.

He had been so stupid. He had trusted the beast and let it go. He had no weapon on him; Hannibal had no collar on. Will had exposed his neck to the predator. He shouldn't have been surprised that it had finally attacked him.

He had been so naive.

He started to whine quietly, the salty scent of tears spread in the air, mixing with the scent of the omega's fear. When it hit the alpha's nostrils so close, when Hannibal smelled the tears and heard Will's muffled sob, he froze, his fangs already grazing the scent gland. The omega's scent and whining pierced him painfully, causing the hairs on his skin to stand on end. His eyes opened a little wider.

He slowly pulled his head back to look at the omega's tearful face and flared his nostrils. He closed his eyes, letting go of Will's throat when he realized *what* he was doing. It fell on him with all its weight. He was confused, not knowing what had just happened. Why did he react in such a way?

"...I'm sorry," he whispered hoarsely, retreating.

Will flinched and opened his eyelids, hearing these words and feeling the alpha's body withdraw instead of the expected fangs under his skin. His breathing quickened. He looked at Hannibal, and when he realized that the threat had clearly passed, he jumped off the bed abruptly.

"Fuck you," he hissed, baring his fangs, and fled the room, slamming the door behind him. He locked himself in the bathroom to tidy up himself and his wound. And to calm down.

He went downstairs quietly and carefully. He hoped that Hannibal would stay in his room because the omega didn't want to see him, and he knew that Hannibal had an uncanny ability to pretend that everything was fine and nothing had happened.

He sat down on the carpet by the fireplace and whistled for his dogs. They surrounded him, wagging their tails and sticking out their tongues. Will hugged Max, lifted Buster onto his lap, and lay down slowly, allowing himself to be surrounded by his furry companions. He didn't realize that the alpha was also extremely unsettled. Hannibal paced his room nervously, the image of Will still in his mind, the scent of his distress still in his nostrils. What had he done? How could he allow himself to lose control like that?

He did look for Will after a moment, hearing him leave the bathroom. He glanced at him from his place on the stairs, seeing the makeshift, living nest the omega had hidden in.

"...Will?" Hannibal said carefully. He sounded almost uncertain, restless. Like a child who had broken a vase.

The omega flinched slightly and lifted his head, hearing his voice. He regretted now that he didn't have his own room and lived in the open space of the living room. It had never bothered him before, but now, for the first time, he felt threatened in his own home.

"...please don't come downstairs today," he finally said quietly. Hannibal was silent for a moment, motionless and simply watching Will from above. He slowly lowered his head slightly, sad, but didn't protest.

"...of course," he replied. It was still a long time until evening, a few hours before dinner time, which Hannibal would usually prepare for Will, but he didn't move from the upper floor, though, since his presence was uncomfortable for the omega. He returned to his room filled with the pungent smell of distress and fear.

***

When Hannibal went downstairs the next morning, he found Will sitting at the table in front of an open laptop.

The omega had already calmed down, had built his forts anew. He had glasses on his nose, a t-shirt, and brown corduroy trousers on. Hannibal looked at him, standing in the entrance to the living room like a child waiting to be scolded. Or a dog that knows it did wrong and is waiting for the owner's reaction. He didn't even greet him with the usual, sunshine 'good morning'. He looked at Will carefully, observing his reactions and assessing his scent.

Will slowly raised his gaze to the alpha, hearing his approach. His gaze seemed forcibly composed, and his scent was calm even, but the whole room smelled of residual bitterness and salt, which made the hairs on the back of the alpha's neck stand on end.

"I found a new place for you," Will said quietly. Hannibal froze. His heart beat faster, nervously.

"...excuse me?" He asked after a moment of silence, as if he wasn't sure he understood correctly. "What 'place'?"

Will slowly turned the laptop's screen towards the alpha.

Hannibal saw a vast, luxurious resort surrounded by gardens, a park with a swimming pool, tennis courts, and sports fields. But all of this was surrounded by high walls with barbed wire.

"It's a... retirement house for alphas," Will replied after a moment and straightened up in the chair, leaning back against it. He slid his glasses off his eyes and rubbed his eyelids with his fingers. He looked sleepy and tired, as if he hadn't slept a wink all night. Hannibal frowned, feeling as if he had been punched straight in the heart when he heard that. "It's a good place for alphas, it's a luxury and fancy one; you won't be forced to do anything there, you will be able to draw, compose, pursue hobbies, and live in peace. I will pay them well, you will have

your own private wing, and all your things from your home will be transported there," Will said. He had clearly already thought everything out.

It really was a good place for alphas.

And Hannibal couldn't even be mad at him, because despite everything, Will's words were filled with genuine concern. And despite that, the alpha seemed almost... hurt, frightened by such a vision, as if he had heard that he would be sent to the depths of hell. Although he would probably find his way there very quickly.

"No," Hannibal denied. He swallowed hard. Will really thought he would be happy with leaving? Going to some facility, a golden cage? Live in prison, and above all, live *without Will* ?

That last thought stung him the most.

He exhaled through his nostrils.

"I am... I'm sorry, Will. My actions were extremely inappropriate."

Will nodded.

"Yeah. Well, you are who you are, and I know what you are capable of. It would be stupid to blame you," he replied and forced a grim smile.

He could only blame himself.

"I told you at the beginning that I have to figure out what to do with you and you can't stay here. I was looking, browsing, and reading forums; this is the best I can do," he added. "I already filled out the form. They will come pick you up in two days." Hearing the last words, Hannibal felt his heart stop for a moment. He felt pure fear, thinking that Will could leave him, send him away somewhere. And although he could escape, kill everyone, of course, it would bring problems to Will, who would end up behind bars.

The alpha didn't want that.

"No," he gasped. He walked closer to stand right in front of Will. He stopped, freezing suddenly, as if to not scare the omega with this sudden movement. Will didn't react to this closeness. He only tensed slightly but didn't look at the alpha, unable to look him in the eye. Hannibal looked at him, seeing only his profile. "I want to stay with you," he denied. "I cannot leave. Please... I am sorry, Will. I acted terribly. It will not happen again."

Will felt a pinchinside at those words. He pursed his lips. He frowned and swallowed hard.

"...I already made my decision," he whispered quietly, avoiding looking at Hannibal like the plague. "You can always kill me and run away if you prefer," he added. The alpha exhaled heavily through his nostrils. He came closer and knelt down, partly to make Will pay attention to him, to look him in the eye.

"Will," he whispered. "Please. Don't make me go." Will closed his eyes for a moment, and when he opened them, he could already see Hannibal in sight. He couldn't look away and fixed his gaze on him.

His heart beat faster, painfully.

"...you said by yourself that there is nothing I can ‘make you’ do, and that you do only what you want," he whispered quietly. Hannibal frowned slightly, hearing that reasoning. He looked at the omega from below.

"Yes," he admitted quietly. "And I want to be with you. To stay here with you. There isn't a chance that I would get bored of your company... since even the sight of you or sound of your voice is making my heart beat." Will was silent, looking at him with slightly enlarged eyes. He was unaware that they had glazed over slightly.

Hannibal approached to nestle his head in Will's hand lying on his thigh. He looked into the omega's eyes.

"...because I imprinted on you the first moment I saw you."

Will froze. He held his breath for a moment. He looked at the alpha in disbelief.

After a moment, however, he shook himself and shook his head negatively.

"...no. It's impossible... The first moment was in court. And the first moment after I bought you, you wanted to kill me," he whispered. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, expressively, not withdrawing his head nestled in Will's hand.

"If I've tried to kill you, I can assure you you would be killed," the alpha replied. He tilted his head slightly. "The realization of imprinting is also not immediate. It's not like you can compare this feeling to anything you've ever experienced before."

Will lowered his head and finally looked him in the eye. He shivered slightly when he saw the enormity of strong emotions hitting his mind.

He swallowed and closed his eyelids, gathering the last of his reason and willpower.

"...I will visit you often. It's not far away," he whispered quietly. The alpha looked like a kicked puppy. He frowned slightly.

"That is not where I need to be," he denied. "I need to stay with you, Will. Please."

Will closed his eyelids, feeling his eyes glaze over. He exhaled, his scent salty and heavy, betraying sadness.

He moved his hand higher, or rather it moved without his will. His fingers combed through the alpha's short hair, clipped after his incarceration.

"You don't belong here," he whispered. His cabin in the middle of the wilderness was no place for the Chesapeake Ripper.

"I belong where you are," the alpha denied in a whisper, accepting the subtle caress with a slight narrowing of his eyes.

Will swallowed.

"My heat is close. I can feel it... I can't be so open and vulnerable around you," he added, withdrawing his hand. Hannibal took it in his own, handling it gently.

"I need you to be open and vulnerable around me," the alpha replied quietly. "This is what I desire. I need you to be close. To be mine." Will frowned. He withdrew his hand.

"This is not about you and what you want," he announced coldly. "I know it's stupid, but before yesterday you could make me feel safe. Now I cringe at the mere thought of being around you in such a state." Hannibal lowered his head sadly, resting it on the omega's thighs.

"So use me," he said after a moment quietly. "Chain me up and use me as you please." Will looked glumly at the back of his head. It was a pleasant, warm weight on his thigh. He reached out again and combed through his short locks.

Hannibal was like a dog that was going to be returned to the shelter because he destroyed the furniture, and eventually put to sleep because no one wants a dog like that.

He closed his eyes.

"I will think about it," he finally whispered after a moment. He felt the alpha's muscles relax slightly. He narrowed his eyes more calmly, although the hair on his neck was still slightly, nervously bristling. He was scared at the prospect that Will might give him up.

"I'm sorry," he whispered quietly, his nose in his thighs. "I've never lost control. Especially in such a manner."

Will closed his eyes. He combed through the alpha's hair, petting him like a puppy. His own dogs often laid their heads on his thigh when he was sitting.

"...I guess my words weren't exactly helpful with maintaining it," he whispered quietly. "But I think it would be better if you have your collar on," he added. Hannibal was clearly not happy at the thought, but he didn't protest, not removing his head from the omega's thighs. He could still see the burnt, fresh mark on his neck and nape. It had only been a few days.

"If you decide so," the alpha replied quietly, politely. He clung to that subtle touch, scared that he might lose it. Such behavior clearly went beyond the comfort zone of the Chesapeake Ripper, so proud and always satiated by a sense of superiority, a control freak. The sight made Will's heart squeeze tightly, painfully, as if he didn't have a dangerous, cannibalistic murderer next to him at all, but a poor, lost, defenseless boy.

"...I will cancel your application," he finally whispered, against his own better judgment but certainly not against what he felt. He didn't want to send the alpha away. He simply knew that he should. Hannibal exhaled, clearly calmer. He pressed his nose against the omega's thighs and flared his nostrils, inhaling his scent deeply. He let out a quiet growl, closing his eyes.

"Thank you," he whispered hoarsely, feeling how tight his throat was with nerves. He really was like a scared boy, thinking about the prospect of losing Will. He needed to be close to him, and, what overwhelmed him even more, he needed his consent and approval to do so. It wouldn't be enough for him to do it against his will.

Will narrowed his eyes, unsure if he had made the right decision. Just this morning, he had been convinced that it was the right thing to do. Now, seeing Hannibal's desperation and despair, he broke so easily. He didn't want to admit to himself that he didn't want to send the alpha away at all.

He combed his hair, doing it almost instinctively.

"I am not sure if spending my heat together is a good idea, though. You will stay here; I will go to a clinic," he added. "I don't want to end up with my throat ripped out."

Hannibal narrowed his eyes when he heard that. He felt that it would drive him crazy if Will was away from him at some stupid clinic at that time.

"I don't want you hurt. It literally stands in opposition to what I need and desire myself," the alpha denied. It was a selfish argument, but at least Will could be sure that it was sincere. "I couldn't significantly harm you in high anger. Why would I be suddenly able to do it in desire?" Will looked him in the eye, withdrawing his hand.

"You were angry, but aware of everything. When I will be in heat, you will go into a rut. You might kill me and not even realize it, and fuck my dead body for the next two days," he muttered wryly. Hannibal frowned slightly, clearly displeased by such a vision. "You are a beast, Hannibal. We both know it." The alpha raised his gaze at him, until now nuzzling the omega's thighs.

"Yes," he admitted, not denying the obvious. "But hurting you would be too much of a loss. However, you can always put a mask on me if you prefer to be secured from biting." Will bit his lip slightly.

"...fine," he replied, causing a twinge of hope in the alpha. He closed his laptop and stood up, moving away from the alpha, leaving him kneeling by the chair. He raised his head like an alert animal, and if his ears were mobile, they would probably have been raised alertly as well. "I'm going fishing today," Will informed, moving towards the closet to change. Only now, left, Hannibal perhaps realized the position he was in and felt a certain discomfort associated with it. He cleared his throat, embarrassed, straightened up, and smoothed his shirt. He watched Will carefully.

"I can be your company," he offered. He didn't want Will to leave without him. "If you allow, of course. I may help you with carrying equipment and draw you during fishing." Will felt a hint of dissatisfaction. He wanted to go alone. This was his me-time. He hadn't been alone even once since he bought Hannibal. He felt uneasy in his own home. He needed to recharge and rest. Especially after yesterday's situation.

But he could sense Hannibal's intense desperation, which he couldn't ignore. Just as he couldn't ignore an abandoned dog.

He turned to face him, throwing a plaid flannel shirt over his shoulders and beginning to button it.

"Draw me?" He repeated, raising his eyebrows. Hannibal raised his own slightly. He stepped closer but stopped six feet from Will so as not to overwhelm him.

"Yes," he replied. "I am quite a decent artist. And beauty such as yours should be properly portrayed."

Will felt his cheeks warm.

"Yeah. I know you are a great artist," he replied quietly. He had seen the alpha's works via murder tableau very often. Hannibal stared at him, feeling a warmth in his heart that grew from the compliment, and he himself puffed up slightly. "If you want to go, you can. But I don't need a slave to carry my stuff, I will manage," Will replied. "And I am afraid I don't have any sketchbooks or anything like that," he added. Hannibal smiled.

"This is not an issue," he assured. "Just a few pieces of paper would be alright. You are going to outshine the material used no matter which one is chosen." Will did not know how to react to this compliment. His inner omega was pleased, but he himself felt embarrassed, completely unaccustomed.

"...sure," he muttered and took a squared notebook and a pen out of the drawer.

"I shall prepare something to eat for us. Please bring your fishing gear in the meantime. We will eat outside, it's a beautiful day." Will didn't answer, only glancing at the alpha. He hadn't had company while fishing since... well, since his father died.

Without a word, he headed for his shed, where he had all his equipment.

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

He unbuckled Hannibal's belt and unbuttoned the trousers, then slid his underwear off his hips. He gasped when he saw his cock.

It was so big.

Chapter Notes

And here is another chapter and more smexy time!

Thanks to all readers for support, especially to those who left comments <3

Small reminder that sadly you will have to wait longer for next chapters as I have to edit them and my amazing beta must fix all my stupid mistakes, erorrs and typos and that takes a lot of time (but every comment makes me work faster!)

Thank you @Redeye17 for beta! <3

From the side, it must have looked unusual, Will carrying an entire armful of fishing equipment, hands full of rods and bags with specialized tools, while the alpha had only a basket with a prepared breakfast and his drawing kit in his hands.

And when they reached the stream, Hannibal spread the blanket he had brought on the grass and began to lay out food in containers. And, of course, a thermos with coffee brewed before he left. He handed Will a cup filled with it, while the omega fumbled with his rod.

“This is a lovely place,” the alpha said, looking around. “Is this your usual fishing spot?” Will stood motionless for a moment, a cup of coffee in one hand and a fishing rod in the other, as if not knowing what to do, completely lost. He wasn’t used to having anyone in this place, his sacred place, for company while he fished.

After a moment, he cleared his throat and took a sip of coffee.

"Yeah. It's... my place. I often come back here. Whether physically or just in my mind," he replied quietly and set the thermos cup on a stone. He began to prepare the lure and checked the float. Hannibal tilted his head slightly, curiously.

"So it's a part of your mind palace. The place you wander when you need to feel safe. Does the stream bring you peace of mind?" Will took a deep breath, drawing air into his lungs, and closed his eyes.

"Yes, it does," he replied quietly.

A cool, gentle wind was blowing, shaking the tree branches. The leaves rustled, mixing with the sound of the fast-flowing stream. Hannibal was glad that Will had taken him to *his place* . He began to spread out the simple breakfast he had prepared. He handed Will a buttered roll with radish and homemade cottage cheese. Will bit into it, catching it in his teeth, then threw the rod and placed it on the stand on the bank. He sat down on the blanket and looked at the breakfast prepared by the alpha.

He ate a roll and reached for a radish. Silence reigned between them, broken only by the whistle of the wind and the murmur of the stream.

"...do you have a place like this? A place where you can always go back and every time feels like home?" he asked after a long moment of silence. Hannibal looked up at him, just pulling out a container of scrambled eggs and sausage. He smiled slightly.

"I do. My palace is vast, even by medieval standards. The foyer is the Norman Chapel in Palermo, severe, beautiful, and timeless, with a single reminder of mortality. A skull, graven on the floor," he said with a light, warm smile. Will listened to him, watching him carefully.

He felt the desire to see it someday.

Hannibal raised his gaze to Will, handing him half a bun with still warm scrambled eggs sprinkled with chives on it. Will flared his nostrils. He felt a rush of saliva and hunger.

"What meat did you use?" he asked. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly. After a moment, he smiled slightly, indulgently, when he understood the reason for the question. Because it was not simply curiosity and a desire to delve into the culinary aspects of what was landing in Will's mouth.

"Lamb and pork," he replied. "Just like in the sausages I put in your breakfast yesterday, what Miss Katz was so curious about. I respect your wish not to eat human flesh yet."

Will looked at him suspiciously for a moment, not having any certainty that it was not a lie. He slowly raised one eyebrow, hearing the last word.

"Yet?"

Hannibal arches his own eyebrows innocently.

"We don't know what the future brings. Perhaps you will become comfortable with expanding your palette." Will frowned slightly. Hannibal seemed so certain of it. Like it was only a matter of time. Like Will was a child who would refuse to eat spinach on a whim but would eventually grow out of it. And that was annoying. Finally, however, he sighed and shoved a portion of scrambled eggs into his mouth.

"It's comforting to know you are able to respect my wishes," he replied quietly, looking at his plate. Hannibal smiled subtly.

"I have my manners, Will," he replied. He looked at him. "And you are too precious for me. Forcing you into making such a serious step wouldn't have any value."

Will responded to his look by taking a bite of sausage. He didn't comment. He narrowed his eyes and ate in silence.

"Thank you," he said when he finished his meal and took a sip of coffee. Then he got up and went to his fishing rod. He put on his rubber boots and slowly began to delve into the stream.

He stopped, the water reaching his knees, and squinted his eyes, and after a few seconds he closed them completely, clutching the fishing rod in his hand. Hannibal didn't bother him, he just tilted his head slightly, taking in the sight of him. He studied it intently, as if he wanted to commit every detail to memory. He reached for his notebook and pen and began drawing Will on that unfortunate graph paper. He worked with concentration. Will was a good model, remaining almost completely still as his thoughts drifted away, immersed in his own stream.

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A few hours passed, and it finally started to get dark and cold. The fishnet was almost full.

"Okay, let's go back," Will broke the silence for the first time in hours, stepping onto the shore. Hannibal stirred, having dozed off, half-lying under a tree. He raised his eyebrows slightly, looking at Will and the darkness around him. Will put down the rod and began packing his gear.

"You can now show me how good you are at cooking fish dishes."

Hannibal stood up with a quiet exhale, closing the notebook with the drawing inside.

"That's a wonderful catch," he said, looking at the fishnet. "I suppose we will have surplus to put in the freezer," he added. The fish will land next to Remy's packed body parts.

Will tried to pretend that the words didn't sound domestic to him. Like an old married couple planning a cozy evening next to the fireplace.

"Would you like me to help with carrying?"

Will shook his head.

"I'm good," he replied. He hooked the fish onto a special rope that he threw over his shoulders. The fish hung on his body. He picked up the rod, the tool bag, and adjusted his

cap. "Let's go," he said, and headed down the path back toward the house. Hannibal followed him. Water dripped from Will's soaked pants, and the fish struggled against his vest.

One moment Will was walking down the path burdened with fish, and the next, after barely blinking, he was already sitting in an armchair. He had clearly had a shower, half-naked, wrapped in a towel, and a wet compress on his forehead. An appetizing smell was coming from the kitchen, and one could hear the alpha bustling around there.

On the table in front of Will, there was a half-empty cup of tea and uncapped encephalitis medication.

Will blinked in disorientation. He looked around the room, glanced at the cup, at himself, and then towards the kitchen.

He stood up slowly, and still wrapped in a towel, went to the kitchen. He stopped in the doorway and cast a careful glance at Hannibal.

"...what happened?" he asked after a moment. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, looking at him with a polite question in his eyes.

"I am preparing dinner," he replied slowly. He was just putting fish covered in lemon in the oven.

Will frowned anxiously.

"I can see that," he replied. "But *what happened* ?" he said. His scent betrayed distress.

Hannibal looked at him with concern. He placed a hand on his forehead.

"You just took a shower, and I prepared you tea so you can take your medicine. Your temperature is high. I believe you missed a dose in the morning."

Will swallowed.

"I can't remember any of it; we were in the forest heading home," he said. He took a breath, trying to calm down. "I lost time."

Hannibal frowned slightly, concerned. He bowed his head and flared his nostrils at the omega's temple.

"Come, please. First of all, it's important to take your medicine," he said, gently leading Will towards the armchair. He sat him down and wrapped him in a blanket, then adjusted the compress on his forehead.

He crouched down next to him, looking into his eyes. "I'm sorry. I should've reminded you about it in the morning."

He handed Will his pills and cup while he began preparing the injections. Will squeezed the teacup tightly in his fingers. He looked at Hannibal, kneeling in front of him again. He licked his lips.

"I believe you had your own concerns in the morning," he replied quietly. "And it's not your job to watch me like a mother hen. I am an adult. You don't have to do anything," he whispered.

He took the pills, then extended his hand for injection. He exhaled quietly and closed his eyes.

He had hoped that after a day of fishing he would feel better, but he felt even worse.

Hannibal calmly gave him the injections and looked up at him.

"Wasn't it always alphas responsibility to provide?"

Will looked him in the eye.

"Yes. Before," he replied quietly. "And omegas' responsibility was to be obedient, to present every time an alpha wanted sex and push out baby after baby," he said dryly.

Before the law was changed, omegas had no rights, like slaves, treated worse than garbage by alphas.

"Omegas can provide for themselves," he added.

Hannibal tilted his head slightly.

"I didn't say they can't," he denied calmly, gently. He returned Will's look. "But providing is deeply written in alphas' DNA, in our instincts. Especially when we are imprinted on the omega. This is not even a responsibility, but a need. So yes, I do feel that I should have taken care of your medicines. I want you to be healthy and well."

Will swallowed, feeling the heat on his cheeks. He blushed even more, despite being quite hot from the illness. He lowered his head, averting his gaze.

"...I won't forbid you to do that," he said quietly.

He would be lying if he said that the fact that someone was taking care of him didn't make him feel pleasantly warm inside. Hannibal smiled slightly, staring at his red face. He slowly stood up and briefly touched his lips to the omega's heated forehead. He flared his nostrils as he did so.

"Taking care of you, I must say it would be appropriate for you to have another MRI scan in the hospital soon, perhaps tomorrow. Just to be sure. Your brain is very fragile now. It would be best for you to have your heat as soon as possible." Will smiled mirthlessly.

"Yeah, tell me more about being fragile," he muttered wryly. "I hate hospitals and doctors," he added grumpily, although he knew Hannibal was right. "We can go. And we should also get your stuff from your home finally. It's been days since I promised you to retrieve them." Winston approached him and whined, nuzzling his thigh. Just like Hannibal did in the morning. And just like his, Will stroked Winston's head. Hannibal felt a hint of irrational irritation, looking at it.

He closed his eyes, and after a moment he got up, hearing the alarm on the oven timer.

"We should also prepare everything for your first time," he noticed. He smiled slightly at the omega at these words before heading to the kitchen, dressed in an apron. Will froze in shock and led him with a look, slightly parting his lips. At first, he didn't understand what the man was talking about. He gasped and hid his face in his hands when he was alone in the living room.

Soon, fragrant fish dishes landed on the table.

"Baked Trout with Preserved Lemon Vinaigrette," Hannibal introduced the main course. "I would also like to invite you to taste the Trout Tartare with Fennel Remoulade and Tobiko. In addition, we have a salad with pine nuts and crispy fish skins. Of course we also have soup, hot trout chowder with sweet corn and cashews." Will glanced at the table and flared his nostrils. His stomach clenched with hunger at the delicious smell. His eyes gleamed. The omega in him was pleased that the alpha took such good care of him.

"No human meat?" he made sure, grabbing the cutlery. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly tellingly, hearing such a question.

"If someone didn't cast a spell on this trout you caught, then I believe not," he replied. "Each dish was prepared with the same fish, not wasting anything." Will glanced at him suspiciously, not commenting that Hannibal would have his own ways of smuggling human meat into such a dish. Like he had done before.

He cut himself a piece of fish and began to stuff it into his mouth, eating quickly, despite the wonderful taste of the dish. He purred with satisfaction but ate too quickly to savor it. Hannibal watched him for a moment with attention and concern, sitting down opposite him.

"You can slow down," he noted, half-jokingly, raising his gaze at him. "I can always prepare more if this won't be enough. Don't be stressed and enjoy the flavor."

Will looked at him carefully, freezing in place. He raised his eyebrows.

"Huh? I am not stressed," he replied. He didn't understand what the point of that remark was. "I always eat fast."

Hannibal looked at him, taking a sip of his wine, swirling it first so that the bouquet would enter his nostrils. Every movement he made during dinner was calm, he ate much slower than Will, in small, carefully chewed bites.

"But then you can't enjoy every bite and just let the flavors burst in your mouth," he noted. "I believe it has something to do with your past?" Hearing this, Will froze. He narrowed his eyes and looked at Hannibal coldly.

"Excuse me?" he asked, straightening up and putting his fork on his plate. "What are you implying, Doctor Lecter? Are you trying to psychoanalyze me?"

The omega visibly perked up and frowned.

"Don’t psychoanalyze me. You won't like me psychoanalyzed," he added coldly. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, hearing this tone, seeing the omega's pertness, and smelling the spicy notes in his scent. He put down his glass of wine, becoming serious.

"I can assure you I am not," he denied gently, calmly. "I just recognized in your behavior something that I went through myself as a child." Will narrowed his eyes searchingly. For a moment he wondered whether he should let out a snarl or continue the subject.

"What?" he spat out gruffly, almost barking, when curiosity about Hannibal's past won out over his need to protect his privacy and hide his weaknesses. Hannibal even felt a note of amusement, seeing and feeling this contradiction in Will’s behavior. He reached for the cutlery.

"The hunger," he replied, looking the omega in the eye. And Will knew that it was not about the usual, innocent hunger that one felt after a day of hard work, sitting down to a delicious dinner.

He didn't answer, looking into the alpha's eyes, feeling every hair on his body stand on end.

"Not knowing when, and if, you will have access to another bite again." Will swallowed. He pressed his lips together and slowly looked away. His scent was sour, dissatisfied. The omega was... embarrassed? And yet he didn't deny it.

"We've been poor," he finally muttered quietly, as a brief explanation, returning his gaze to the fish. It was clearly not a pleasant topic for him. "I mean me and my father. Haven't met my mother," Will added and slipped a piece of roasted fish into his mouth. Hannibal narrowed his eyes when he heard that. There was no pity in his eyes, no sense of superiority either. Only understanding, on an equal level.

"I am sorry," he said. He put a bit of trout tartare on the baguette. "I experienced hunger in my childhood as well."

Will was quiet for a moment, analyzing those words. Did it have anything to do with Hannibal's cannibalism? He was curious, though he didn’t ask.

He looked at his plate, continuing to eat.

"I may have not been forced to eat people, but I was forced to dig in trash and eat rotten leftovers. Fishing was often the only way to get something to eat."

"This is the reason why fishing brings you a feeling of safety," Hannibal guessed. "You have replaced compulsion with comfort."

Just like Hannibal with cannibalism.

Will caught the allusion and looked him in the eye. He popped a baked carrot into his mouth.

"We are not the same. We have different tastes," he said quietly.

"Perhaps," the alpha replied. "But fishing is just another way of hunting after all, isn’t it?"

Catching a victim and taking their life to eat them later. Only through different means. And with different types of prey.

Will narrowed his eyes slightly. He cut himself another piece of fish.

"Are you calling me a predator?" he asked curiously. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly.

"Of course," he replied without thinking, without blinking, looking Will straight in the eye. "Both during fishing and during your work. You catch your prey. And I've become one of them." Will didn't know how to interpret the thrill and shiver he felt at those words. He licked his lips.

"So the predator became the prey," he replied. "Is this why you are here and haven't tried to hurt me and run away? Because you accept my victory and have respect for the greater predator?" he asked. Hannibal smiled slightly.

"I've become intrigued by such a predator," he admitted. "And I don't see a reason why I would hurt you for impressively fulfilling your instinct. Why should you be blamed for following your nature?"

Will lifted the corner of his mouth in amusement at how Hannibal phrased it.

"I caught you because it was my job. Not because of some 'dark urges of my nature'," he replied. Hannibal raised his eyebrows, tilting his head slightly.

"Why couldn't it be both?" he asked, looking at the omega. He bit into a baguette with steak tartare, chewed, and swallowed. "Isn't it natural to experience joy from your job well done if it's connected to what your nature desires from you? Just like you feel pleasure after a successful hunt. Fishing, if you prefer." Will felt amusement.

"I fish because I like it, it relaxes me, and I have food. I didn't catch you nor any other killers for food," he replied. "We are not the same, no matter how badly you'd like that," he added. Hannibal smiled subtly.

"Of course we are not the same. That would be boring, wouldn't it?" he muttered. Will didn't answer, watching him. Hannibal put the steak tartare on the rest of the baguette, then did the same with Will's half, to serve it to him, spread and sprinkled with toppings.

"But we both hunt for some kind of resource. Either it is food... or winning over another predator. It gives a sense of power and satisfaction, doesn't it?"

Will took the baguette from his hand, but did not take his eyes off the alpha.

"Maybe. But the power and satisfaction are mine now. What's left for you now that you've dropped to the bottom of the food chain?" he asked teasingly and took a bite of the baguette. Hannibal tilted his head, not taking his eyes off him. Maintaining the eye contact that had been uncomfortable for the omega not long ago.

"Admiring the view," he replied calmly without blinking.

Will did not look away, although he had difficulty holding eye contact as he felt the heat and blush on his cheeks. The omega in him purred, pleasantly flattered. His scent became sweeter and more pleasant. Encouraging.

"At least you can do that," he replied teasingly. Hannibal, however, was amused by this tease, looking at Will warmly and inhaling the scent with satisfaction.

"More than that, I hope. Your scent is getting sweeter, Will." Will tilted his head slightly, biting the baguette.

"So? I just told you I am not controlled by instincts," he replied.

Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly.

"Not allowing them to control you does not equal them not existing," he noticed. He narrowed his eyes. "Allow me, please," he said, and then leaned in to the omega. Very close, blowing his pheromones into Will's nostrils. He seemingly innocently pushed one of the omega's long curls behind his ear and wiped a bit of sauce from the corner of his lips with his thumb. Will watched him without understanding, slowly raising his eyebrows. He instinctively withdrew his head slightly. He wiggled his nostrils, inhaling the alpha's scent, he felt hotter, but his gaze was full of incomprehension.

"The fuck r' you doin'?" he asked, bewildered. Hannibal raised his eyebrows innocently, as if he were the embodiment of innocence.

"I wiped the sauce from the corner of your lips."

"And why did you do that? Is it some weird way of seduction?" he asked and snorted mockingly. Hannibal tilted his head slightly. He smiled with amusement.

"Why? Is it working, Will?" he asked, but clearly half-jokingly.

"No, it's not. I am not a character from a teen vampire drama," the omega replied. Hannibal frowned subtly and tilted his head questioningly, looking as if he had no real idea what Will was talking about.

"It was an act of care. Which you said you wouldn't forbid me from." Hearing this twist of his words, Will rolled his eyes and snorted.

"Unnecessary care, but very well," he announced as he rose from the table. "Let's go to finally collect your stuff," he said. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, his fork in hand.

"You barely ate, Will. And you just experienced memory loss from an encephalitis attack," he reminded.

"I’m already full," Will replied.

"I can go on my own if you prefer to rest." Will looked at him more closely.

"You can't go on your own, Hannibal. You're an alpha, you know how law works," he replied, irritated that he had to keep reminding him of that because it gave him no pleasure.

The omega sighed.

"I promised you that we would go for your stuff days ago and I feel bad that you don't have any of your things here. We can't wait until I am recovered, it can be weeks," he announced seriously. Hannibal looked at him carefully, rising from the table. He reached out a hand to frame the omega's face, seeing how... concerned and committed he was to providing him with comfort. He felt warmth in his heart and smiled subtly.

"Alright then," he said. Will didn't pull away from the touch, didn't flinch either, slowly getting used to the fact that Hannibal didn't know what personal space meant. He swallowed, feeling the vibrations on his skin in reaction to the alpha's touch. A pleasant, typically omega reaction to the proximity of a potential mate, intended to make it easier for the omega to open up.

"I actually wanted to show you my house. Do you like music, Will?" Hannibal began, starting to gather the unfinished dishes from the table to put them in containers.

Will raised his eyebrows.

"I guess?" he replied. "I am from New Orleans; I grew up surrounded by jazz," he added. Hannibal froze. He looked at him in a way that suggested an inner indignation perfectly hidden under the polite facade. He closed his eyes for a moment before looking back at Will.

"I was thinking more about classical music," he explained, although Will sensed that the alpha was restraining himself from saying 'real' or 'proper'. "I play the harpsichord," he added. "I would love to play something for you. If you grant me such a pleasure and listen, of course." Will was amused. To him, music was music.

"I am not much of an expert on it," he replied. "But I am certainly able to appreciate beautiful music, so I don't see a reason why I wouldn't listen to your play," he added. Hannibal smiled slightly, happily and boyishly, hearing that. He was clearly excited about playing for Will.

"I will let the dogs outside and we can go," he informed and headed for the door.

Ten minutes later, after Hannibal had cleaned up after dinner and secured the leftovers, Will threw his brown jacket over his shoulders and put his keys in his pocket. Then he grabbed a collar and muzzle and looked at Hannibal expectantly. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly at the sight, but only sighed, approaching politely. He looked into his eyes as he did so. He bent his head slightly to let Will put them on. Will, looking into his eyes as well, fastened the collar around his neck and slipped a finger between it and the alpha's skin to check if it wasn't too tight. Then he put the mask on his face and fastened it behind his head. He licked his lips.

"There's really something alluring to this," he said suddenly quietly, attaching a leash to the alpha's collar, which he wrapped around his hand. "Maybe I should start using it more often

so you won't forget your place like yesterday," he added. Hannibal tilted his head slightly. Despite the irritating provocation, he caught something intriguing in Will's words.

The fact that the omega was clearly and sincerely excited by what he was seeing.

"Well, I believe you will have an opportunity to use it soon," he noted. He looked the omega in the eye. "Since you wanted to try having sex consciously before your heat."

Will returned his gaze, intrigued but also feeling a hint of irritation inside at these self-assured comments and teasing. He didn't like the fact that Hannibal seemed to be the dominant one, even though he was the one muzzled and leashed. Will suddenly felt a strong need to throw the alpha to the ground, to throw him out of his damn composure and control.

He narrowed his eyes and stepped closer, wrapping the leash around his wrist.

"Right. And wild beasts have to be kept collared and leashed, don't they?" he muttered... and then tugged lightly on the leash, so as to force the alpha to lean forward just a little. Hannibal, surprised, offered no resistance. And then Will brushed his lips against the clear plastic of the muzzle at the height of the other man’s mouth, feeling the holes through which the alpha breathed, not taking his eyes off his eyes. Hannibal stiffened, completely off guard. His hair stood on end, and his heart beat faster, pumping hot blood roaring in his ears. He gasped quietly, stopping breathing for a moment, even though it wasn't technically a kiss, not a direct one.

He glanced at Will, looking lost like a little boy. Because of the mask, the omega couldn't see his red cheeks.

Will licked his lips and smugly walked out of the house, leaving the leash loose. Hannibal stood there for a moment, simply following him with his gaze, which slid to the omega's butt. The alpha licked his lips unconsciously before following Will, still bristling with excitement and shock.

Was it a caress or torture?

***

Will acted as if nothing had happened. He turned on the radio in the car to a classic rock station and headed towards Baltimore, feeling very pleased with himself for having managed to win this little duel of dominance. Hannibal didn't even say a word for most of the drive, still processing what had happened. The omega could feel the alpha's intense gaze on him the whole time, following his every move with his gaze.

"Lead the way," the omega said as they entered the city after an hour of silence.

It was already quite empty, so there weren't that many curious glances on the streets. Soon Hannibal was opening the door for Will, holding it open invitingly.

"Please, come inside," he said. The omega was greeted by a dark interior, which brightened a moment later when Hannibal turned on the light. The eyes were drawn to elegant, classic furniture made of solid, dark wood, walls of a rather rotten green color, omnipresent works of art, statues, and paintings. And, of course, books.

Will felt overwhelmed by the splendor and the vastness of all the decor, although the dark interior and subdued colors somehow gave a sense of security and reminded him of a forest after dark.

"I didn't imagine anything else," he commented, looking around. "But now I know how much you must suffer living in my house," he added. His house was literally the opposite of that. Hannibal smiled with amusement.

"The company is outstanding," he said half-jokingly.

Will stood behind the older man and deftly unfastened his collar and muzzle, then took them off, freeing Hannibal.

"Art shouldn't be restrained, should it?" Will asked. Hannibal smiled at that. He looked at him warmly.

"It definitely should not. Thank you." He invited Will with a gesture towards the living room. "Please, feel free to take anything you've felt interested in. I shall show you my alcohol," he said, moving to the bar. Will raised his eyebrows with interest, hearing mention of alcohol. He smiled slightly with satisfaction. He would gladly drink something expensive. It didn't matter what.

"I am not going to take anything. Those are your things," he replied, walking down the hallway. Hannibal smiled slightly.

"I think you would certainly like to take the alcohol and coffee home. Especially since you can't drink the whiskey right now. You need to wait until you are off your medications."

For now, he poured for the omega a non-alcoholic but also excellent quality drink.

"Very well," he muttered. If they took all this alcohol, he would finally find a moment to drink it at home. Coffee sounded promising too.

Will began to walk around, looking around the house. He stopped in front of a painting depicting a swan having sex with a woman in the dining room and raised an eyebrow skeptically. Hannibal stood next to him.

"Do you recognize the painting?" he began, coming closer to hand him his glass. The crystal glass was thick and intricately decorated. Will took a sip of non-alcoholic whiskey, wrinkling his nose slightly. He'd already managed to get excited for real, good whiskey.

"Leda and the Swan, of course," he replied. "Interesting choice for a dining room."

Hannibal smiled slightly.

"As you are aware, I have a unique taste," he said half-jokingly. "I think that nothing speaks about beauty as loudly as classical art. Especially through controversy, order is found in the beauty of chaos."

Will raised his eyebrows slightly and glanced at the alpha.

"I will drink to that," he commented only and took a sip of pseudo-whiskey. Hannibal smiled in response. "I don't want it in my living room, but as I said, you can do whatever you want with the first floor," Will added. "There is also an attic with some space that can be used as storage," he added and moved on. Hannibal was undoubtedly charmed by the fact that the omega had decided to give him practically half of the house. Even if he usually didn't use it.

"I will gladly use it, thank you." Will looked out into the garden through the glass doors and ran his fingers over the wall covered with plants, resembling a jungle.

"So where is your harpsichord?" he asked. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly. He smiled slightly and gestured in the direction, moving ahead.

"Follow me, please," he said. The harpsichord was covered with a heavy velvet cloth. When Hannibal put down his glass and lifted it, he revealed a beautiful instrument that must have cost a fortune. A subtle but warm gleam appeared in the cannibal's eyes as he ran his hand over the ornate wood. "Have you ever played harpsichord, Will?" Will watched him carefully, with a hint of warmth, seeing his longing for refined art and his old lifestyle.

"Harpsichord no, but the piano yes," he replied. Hannibal had certainly seen the instrument standing in his living room. "Is it a big difference?"

Hannibal smiled, as if indulgently.

"Quite," he admitted. "These are instruments based on a completely different mechanism for producing sound. Harpsichords use mechanisms that were actually used in the earliest pianos; it's more... primal sound. Touching your soul in an almost chaotic manner. Their sound is shorter, each note has tension. Would you like to try yourself first?" he offered.

Will stepped closer, placing the glass on the wooden counter.

"I could try, but you first," he replied, enamored by Hannibal's explanations. Hannibal took a sip of wine, then stretched his fingers. Then he began to play the first notes of ‘Stride la vampa’.

Will listened to him and watched, standing behind him. He felt the music creeping over his skin, causing tremors and the hairs on his body to stand on end. He slowly circled the seat and sat down carefully next to the alpha, so as not to disturb him. The latter's lips twitched slightly, and he looked at Will briefly, fleetingly, focused on the piece. Will was sipping that nasty, castrated whiskey.

"It really does touch the soul," he whispered when Hannibal finished. He smiled slightly. "It's beautiful. Thanks."

Hannibal smiled slightly, clearly happy to be able to share his art with Will.

"A good instrument will allow you to give back exactly what you put into it, but never more," he said. "The sounds of the harpsichord, torn out as if by the teeth of a predator, perfectly convey tragedy and pain. Beauty born from chaos."

He lifted his gaze to the omega, removing his hands and moving slightly to the side, invitingly, to make room for him to place his own hands on the instrument.

"Tell me. Do you have anything that's tearing you up inside that you would like to share, Will? The door in your mind that you never look behind."

Will moved closer to the alpha and looked into his eyes.

"If there is anything like that, I am not aware of it," he whispered quietly. He looked at the keys, placing his hands on them. "I don't play a lot and I don't remember much," he said. He played the first few notes of Mozart's ‘The Magic Flute’ as a test. Hannibal narrowed his eyes. He watched Will with a soft, warm gaze, and there was a slight smile on his lips.

"Good," he whispered directly into his ear. He placed his hands on his counterparts to gently correct their position on the keys. "There is no point in downplaying your skills. The ability to experience art is never forgotten. Just relax and allow your body to show what you feel about it." Will closed his eyes and swallowed. He felt warmer. He nodded slightly and began to play. Hannibal withdrew his hands, not interfering and absorbing the view, and when Will forgot a note, he played it himself so that Will would stay in tempo and could continue with the melody. In this way, Will created his own, calm melody, pushed by Hannibal's bolder insertions. It was like a bird soaring in the wind, driven by sporadic flaps of wings. The music was not violent, it was associated with sadness and nostalgia. It expressed longing for something. Hannibal was satiated with this moment, drawing from it with full handfuls, wanting to carefully engrave each note in his memory. As if Will's soul was allowed to touch. Finally, Will opened his eyelids and looked at his hands.

"It really feels different than a piano," he whispered. The alpha smiled slightly but stared at him with shining eyes like at a masterpiece.

"It does," he confirmed. "It was beautiful."

Will raised the corners of his mouth a little.

"Thank you," he replied. He reached for the glass and took a drink. "So... do you have any bags? We should start packing your things."

Hannibal reluctantly broke away from the moment at the change in subject. He held back a sigh.

"Of course," he said, rising. "However, if you like, we can stay here tonight and go back in the morning. The dogs are walked and have already received their supper."

They were also used to their master's constant, irregular disappearances. Will thought about it. He looked out the window.

It had just started pouring outside. And the beds in this mansion had to be pretty damn comfortable. Besides, it was late. It would be a few hours before they packed up and got back.

"Very well. But I don't have anything for the night," he added. He didn't have a toothbrush or sleeping clothes with him. Hannibal smiled, as excited as a teenager that his crush was spending the night with him. Well, it was kind of true. The only difference was that he was a cannibalistic serial killer, well past his teens.

"Don't worry about anything. You will find everything you need in the guest bathroom, it's downstairs," he explained, gesturing to Will. Will nodded and headed in that direction, already planning to pour himself a regular whiskey as soon as he found a bottle.

"I can give you one of my shirts to use tonight. Would you like to take a long bath first?" Hannibal suggested. "I can prepare it for you," he added helpfully. Will stopped in the doorway and looked at him, surprised at first. Then he realized that Hannibal was just trying to be a *very* nice host.

"Thank you, but I don't need spoiling," he replied, even though deep inside him his inner omega really wanted to be spoiled. However, he didn't want to use Hannibal, he didn't want to treat him like a slave. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, indulgently. He stood in front of him and reached out a hand to grab the omega by the chin. He looked him in the eye.

"I am well aware that you don't," he assured gently. "However, I do feel a need to provide for you. I am actually asking if you will *allow me* to spoil you."

Will swallowed, feeling the warmth and faster heartbeat as usual when the alpha initiated touch.

"...fine," he replied after a moment. He didn't have enough willpower to deny himself. He felt like he was on vacation in an exclusive hotel. "I will go grab a toothbrush. Where should I go then?" he asked. Hannibal smiled, clearly pleased with the agreement.

"Right next to our bedroom," he replied. He gestured to the appropriate door. "Third on the right. I will leave it open for you."

Will nodded, trying to pretend he hadn't noticed the clear ‘our’ in the alpha's response.

"I’ll be right back," he replied. He left the room and went downstairs, looking for the guest room. When he found it, he poked around a bit. The room was decorated in the same style as the rest of the house. There was a replica of da Vinci's *Lady with an Ermine* on the wall and a snow leopard rug on the floor. There was also a bar where Will gladly abandoned thenon-alcoholic whiskey and poured himself a glass of real whiskey. He found a lot of books and

incredibly strange decorations. He hissed when he accidentally broke off the ear of a stuffed squirrel, wanting to check if it was real. He hid it under the rug and headed for the bathroom. He took a new toothbrush from there and headed back upstairs.

He didn't expect that in the main bathroom adjacent to the host's bedroom, adjacent to the host's bedroom, waiting for him, was a fragrant bath full of oils, with bath salts, foam shimmering with golden particles and a table on which there was a recess for a glass and a container of pralines decorated with edible gold.

Will stopped in the doorway, his eyes widening when he saw it. Hannibal was finishing getting everything ready. He smiled when he saw Will and invited him in with a gesture.

"Come, please. Do you want me to help you with washing your back?" Next to him, on a shelf, was a snow-white towel and a bathrobe, and a little further away was Hannibal's elegantly folded shirt. Will swept it over with his gaze, enteringslowly, clutching that unfortunate toothbrush. He flared his nostrils, inhaling the pleasant scent of oils and salts.

"No, thank you, I am good," he replied after a moment, even though he knew what was really hidden under the question. "I didn't know a bath could also be a work of art," he said with admiration, approaching the tub. He put the toothbrush on the shelf next to Hannibal's shirt and slowly began to unbutton his own. The alpha smiled, pompous and pleased with his reaction. He reached out his hands to help Will with the buttons slowly.

"It's just the beginning of art," he replied purringly, mysteriously, looking into Will's eyes, who raised his eyebrows slightly, glancing at the older man questioningly. The alpha withdrew his hands, letting go of the tails of his already unbuttoned shirt.

"Have a pleasant bath," he added. "Take your time." Hannibal left, leaving Will alone in the bathroom. The omega immediately heard the classical music playing quietly in it, pouring from the speakers placed in the corners. He shook his head slightly, but he undoubtedly appreciated the effort. He took off his clothes and slipped into the water.

He groaned quietly with relief when his tense muscles instantly relaxed. He rested his head on the edge of the tub and closed his eyes, intending to really enjoy the bath, as advised, while sipping his proper whiskey.

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When Will emerged from the bathroom over an hour later, he saw petals of white and red, as if bloody carnations spread out on the floor, forming a path to the bedroom. He stopped in surprise, freezing halfway through buttoning Hannibal's shirt that he had been given for the night.

The house was almost completely dark, only a few spot candles showing the way. Will stared at it incomprehensibly for a few seconds, and when he realized what was happening, he rolled his eyes and snorted quietly. He shook his head indulgently.

"Very well," he mumbled and followed the path of lights, stepping on the flower petals with his bare feet. He twitched his nostrils, trying to smell the alpha's scent. He could still smell it nearby. It was only when he slipped into the bedroom that he heard the alpha's voice coming from behind him.

"Hello, Will," the words almost washed over the back of his neck. Will twitched and tensed slightly, and the hair on his body stood up. He turned his head to the side to glance at the man behind him. Hannibal slid his hands onto his shoulders to begin massaging them.

"Did you have a pleasant enough bath?"

The lights in the bedroom were off, the room bathed in semi-darkness, which was only broken up by the spotty, unobtrusive, subtly scented candles that were soothing the nerves and, at the same time spicy, stimulating the senses, ginger with a hint of sandalwood.

Perhaps the semi-darkness was also supposed to enhance the omega's comfort here, allowing him to feel more confident. Less exposed. Like in a nest.

"It was very pleasant, thank you," Will replied after a moment. He felt strangely warm, despite the fact that he had only felt the cold on his skin after leaving the steamy bathroom. He took a deep breath and turned to face Hannibal to look into his eyes. "So this is how you want to fuck me," he muttered directly. Rudely disrupting this artistic pursuit. Hannibal raised his eyebrows slightly, but after a moment he smiled, although his heart beat faster, as if nervously, even uncertainly.

"I promised you a perfect first time, didn't I?" he murmured, sliding his hand higher to the omega's face. He stroked his cheek with his thumb. "I'm aware it would be much more perfect with the puppy adoption, but unfortunately the shelters are not exactly cannibalistic alpha cooperative. I considered a black market puppy, but I figured you wouldn't want to support a pseudo-breeder business." Will's eyes widened at that. His heart beat faster with momentary excitement and joy, which however quickly died down when reason took over.

"Hannibal, you don't have to pay me with puppies," he replied. "I don't need... That is, of course, I would like to have a puppy, but that's not the point and not a reason for that," he added, shaking his head. He smiled slightly. "It would be perfect, puppy or not," he added and released his sweet, tempting pheromones. It wasn't showing the arousal yet, but it was supposed to encourage closer integration. Hannibal smiled, sliding one of his hands on the omega's hip. His eyes flashed and his nostrils flared, inhaling that scent greedily.

"It's a pleasure to hear," he whispered purringly, stroking his chin. And then he lifted it with a delicate gesture and bent his head to connect their lips in a kiss. Gentle, unhurried as if Will were a fragile teacup.

Paradoxically, however, Will sensed a certain teenage, boyish shyness in the alpha's gestures. Uncertainty, as if fear of rejection. Will felt amusement, charmed.

He closed his eyes and responded to the kiss, placing his hands on the alpha's shoulders. Hannibal's lips were warm and encouraging. The omega felt a strong shiver down his spine. And dissatisfaction.

He moved his fingers higher to the alpha's hair and grabbed it, rising onto his toes and deepening the kiss. His tongue crept into the warmth of Hannibal's mouth, sliding over teeth that were incredibly sharp, even for an alpha. Hannibal was taken aback by this initiative at first, but after a moment he let out a quiet, satisfied purr and narrowed his eyes, but didn't close them, admiring and absorbing the view. Continuing the kiss, he grabbed Will under the buttocks to lift him and move him to the bed, also covered in flower petals. Will groaned quietly in surprise but didn't stop, tightening his thighs around the alpha's hips. A moment later, they both fell onto the bed.

Hannibal licked his lips, looking into the omega's eyes as he dropped him against the velvety soft bedding with a quiet moan.

"Do you know the name of these flowers, Will?" he murmured directly into his lips.

Will raised his eyebrows slightly but had an indulgent smile on his lips.

"I am not an uneducated caveman, Hannibal. I can recognize Sweet Williams when I see them," he replied quietly. Hannibal let out a quiet groan, and his lips twitched. He looked Will deep in the eyes.

"I can recognize sweet William when I see him as well. And I'm sure your taste can be even sweeter. So where were we interrupted last time?" he purred. He slowly began to move his lips lower. He nibbled Will's neck with his teeth and licked it caressingly before moving his nose down the material of his own shirt, which was way too big for the omega. The sight of Will in it turned him on like hell.

The omega shuddered, feeling a strong shiver down his spine and the excitement of anticipation when he realized what Hannibal was going to do. He felt the first drops of slick running down his thighs.

The alpha's nose finally found itself between Will's legs, and the alpha ran his tongue over the mound surrounded by a tuft of pubic hair.

"Ahnnm!" Will moaned, surprised by the intensity of it, even though he had expected it.

The alpha felt a sweet taste on his tongue, like floral nectar with a hint of cinnamon and citrus. He raised his gaze to Will, waiting for him to spread his legs. Will looked into his eyes expectantly, his own already clouded with arousal. It took him a moment to understand what Hannibal expected of him. Blushing, he swallowed and slowly spread his thighs wider, invitingly. The alpha let out a quiet purr in praise. He wrapped his arm around Will's waist and kissed him right on the pussy, nestled between his thighs. Hannibal purred straight into his mound and narrowed his eyes, inhaling the scent. He ran his tongue over the entrance, listening to the omega's delicious purr. Then he stuck his tongue inside, no longer playing with subtlety. He immediately moved on to an intense, skilled caress, wanting to flood the omega with pleasure. He held him tightly with his arm as he did so, so that Will would not

wriggle too much, so as not to damage his still-fresh wound. He had predicted that this would be necessary, because Will immediately kicked, surprised by the pleasure. He practically howled and whined, squeezing his eyes shut and throwing his head back.

His back arched, his hands grabbed Hannibal's hair.

"AhhhHnnnn, oh fuck, gods...!" he moaned loudly.

Slick began to grow even more. His body trembled; he felt spasms in his loins. The omega's scent became even sweeter, almost intoxicating. Hannibal bristled, incredibly sensitive to this drug. And until recently, he had thought that he was immune to the charms of omegas.

Well, 'omegas' maybe so. But certainly not Will. He licked his slick like the sweetest nectar, tasting, digging inside him. When he stuck out his tongue, there was so much juice that Will's thighs were almost completely covered in them, and the sheets began to soak.

Hannibal let out a quiet, satisfied groan and rose to his hands to kiss the omega briefly.

"Would you like trying to return the pleasure?" he murmured directly into his lips. Will licked his own, feeling the sweet aftertaste of his slick on them. He raised his eyebrows and smiled slightly, but there was something predatory in that smile.

"If you want me to suck your cock, just say it," he murmured, looking him in the eye defiantly. The alpha blinked, looking almost taken aback by his self-confidence, his boldness.

After a moment, however, his lips twitched slightly.

"Could you suck my cock, Will?" he asked, running his fingertips over the omega's lip. Will felt pleased to hear that question. He slowly sat up, supporting himself on his hands. He moved his lips to Hannibal's, their lips almost touching. He looked him straight in the eye.

"Maybe. If you ask nicely," he murmured. Hannibal smiled, looking at him as if hypnotized. As if he had the most magnificent work of art before him, deserving of boundless admiration and worship.

"Please," he whispered, "could you take my cock deep inside your throat and suck it for me?" Will parted his lips, taking a deep breath. He felt a shiver of excitement at the sound of those words, and a stronger sweet scent filled Hannibal's nostrils. For a moment he was unable to utter a word.

"Lie down," he replied, wetting his lips with his tongue. Hannibal could hear the blood rushing in his ears before he realized what was happening. He licked his own lips hungrily, intending to feast on the sight like a junkie.

He settled down nicely, not interfering but absorbing.

Will ran his hands over Hannibal's body. Over his neck, with the marks from the blows from the collar, and lower, to his torso. He unbuttoned his shirt, irritated by its presence, and slid his hands onto his hairy, muscled titties. The alpha narrowed his eyes with a quiet humm,

feeling the touch of the omega's smooth, soft hands, despite the fact that they were touched by work. Will purred with satisfaction. He avoided the wounds with his hands, of which the alpha still had many from the arena.

"You still have stitches. Are you sure it's a good idea?" he asked quietly, sliding his hands down to the belt of Hannibal's pants. He began to unbutton it, glancing into his eyes carefully. He saw the glow in them, like those of a drug addict on a hunger strike, and also felt the alpha's stronger pheromones. Hannibal intertwined his fingers in Will’s hair, combing his curls. He smiled, captivated by omega’s concern.

"There is nothing able to heal me better than you." Will froze, hearing this... pathetically romantic line straight from a cheap romcom.

His heart started beating faster, and he felt a pleasant warmth inside. "...shut up, you're stupid," he mumbled, embarrassed by these words much more than by what he was about to do.

He unbuckled Hannibal's belt and unbuttoned the trousers, then slid his underwear off his hips. He gasped when he saw his cock.

It was so big. Bigger than typical alpha’s phallus. He could see the small bulge that grows during the rut, turning into a knot, the veins, and the moist tip. The cock was already practically hard.

Will licked his lips and leaned down. He ran his nose along its entire length to inhale the heavy, dominant scent. His vision darkened, and the omega inside him whined loudly.

He wanted it inside.

He spread his lips and took the cock inside them, immediately as deep as he could, starting to suck intensely. He purred, tightening his fingers on the alpha's thighs. Hannibal gasped at the sight, feeling as if his heart was about to burst out in the single moment.

"Hrrrgghh..." he growled quietly, surprised by the intensity of the stimuli. These were much stronger just because of the fact that it was Will’s who was performing it.

Hannibal grabbed him by the hair near his scalp, barely restraining himself from taking matters into his hands and not imposing a heavy rhythm on him. However, he watched this scene with fascination. His gaze was heated, darkened, the pheromones heavy and full of excitement. "Goood boy..."

Will held back his whimper at this praise as the omega inside him purred with satisfaction, pleasantly tickled.

The cock, which had already seemed hard, grew even more significantly in Will's mouth, making it difficult for him to take more into his throat. Will struggled to keep it inside his mouth but, he tried very hard.

He frowned, feeling his jaw go numb, but he spread it wide, moving his head up and down. He closed his eyes, focusing on the task.

He let go of the alpha's thigh to cup his cock at the base with one hand. He swallowed the first drops of semen that appeared at the tip. The entire length glistened with his saliva. The sight was absolutely insane and addictive, perhaps even more so than the delicious, perfect caress itself.

Hannibal growled quietly, exhaling through his nostrils and tugging on Will's hair, moving him away from his crotch. He breathed harder, his cock glistening with saliva, hard and covered with veins.

"Such a good boy forrr me..." he praised hoarsely, throatily, combing the omega's hair affectionately. "How did you learn to suck so well, being purrre as you, Will?"

Will smiled slightly, slightly mockingly, hovering over him. Their faces were an inch apart, their breaths mingled. He smacked his lips loudly, licking his lips.

"Who said I am pure?" he whispered provocatively, looking the alpha in the eye.

He said he had never been with any alpha, but after all, there were still male betas.

What will you do with the thought that someone else had me before you?

End Notes

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